SELF HELP GUIDE to PROBLEM SOLVING

(adapted from the BCCPAC Speaking Up! A parent guide to advocating for students in public schools)

Identify the issue/problem/concern:

 Are you seeing unusual changes in your child's behaviour? Do you think your child is being bullied? Are you concerned about your child's progress in school? Do you think your child is being mistreated by someone? Other concerns could be discipline, health or safety. 	
	Note the events/incidents that have led to this concern: (Who, What, Why, When and Where)
Note such details as: What happened? When did it happen? What difficulties has this situation caused for me or my child? What policies, laws, etc. apply to this situation? What are my rights and responsibilities? What are the system's rights and responsibilities?	
Make sure your concerns are based on what you know to be true from your experience or	

This page aligns with Steps 1, 2 and 3 of What Parents Can Do to Help Their Child

your child's experience.

Solving the problem:

	List some of your ideas for solving the problem:
Note such details as: What will best suit my child's needs? Who should I talk to if I have	
further concerns?	
 Be flexible and open-minded about possible solutions. 	
 The solution may be very different from what you expected. 	
 Explore how possible solutions may work for your child. 	
If you need support, talk to someone you trust.	
Remember to respect everyone's privacy.	
	Other concerns/ideas/questions:
• What question do I want to ask?	
• What works well or doesn't work well for my child?	
• What other concerns do I want to share?	

This page aligns with Steps 5 and 6 of What Parents Can Do to Help Their Child

Planning a meeting:

	The reason for the meeting is:
 Ask how much time will be allowed. 	
	Who will be attending the meeting:
Note such details as: • What is their role in the	
meeting? • How are they involved with my child?	
• At any step in the	
process you are encouraged to bring another individual	
to meetings with the school. This may be a relative, trusted friend or an "advocate".	
• Let others know if you are	
bringing someone: - Would it help me to have	
someone taking notes? - Would I feel outnumbered or overwhelmed?	
- Will I be able to stay on track?	
	I want to accomplish:
How do I think I can solve the	
problem?	

This page aligns with Steps 7 and 8 of What Parents Can Do to Help Their Child

The information I need to participate effectively: (refer back to Solving the Problem)

• Is there specific information that I need or I can give on my child's: - Learning needs? - Emotional needs? - Health? - Safety? - Individual Education Plan (IEP)? - Behaviour plan? - Safety plan?	
• It is important to include your child whenever possible.	What does my child want taken into account?
• Should my child attend the the meeting? - Is this a positive place for my child?	
 Would it be best for the adults to meet first? Is my child able to understand and participate? Is my child okay with coming? 	
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This page aligns with Steps 7 and 8 of What Parents Can Do to Help Their Child

During the meeting:

Have confidence in yourself!

- You know your child and you have important information to share.
- Try to control your emotions. If you start to go off track:
 - Review the purpose of the meeting.
 - Focus on what will work and is best for your child.
 - Openly share information that will lead to better decisions.
 - If you do not understand something ASK!
- Should you take a support person with you?
 - Would it help you to have someone taking notes?
 - Will you feel outnumbered or overwhelmed by yourself?
 - Will you be able to stay on track?

If you need more time, ask for it.

- You may want to consider options, reflect on the needs of your child or gather more information. It may be better to delay the final decision rather than make a decision while under pressure.
- If you agree to something during the meeting and later realize that it won't work for you or your child, ask that the decision be reviewed.
- As the meeting draws to a close, summarize the meeting from your perspective to make sure everyone has a common understanding.
- Ask who is taking the official notes/minutes of the meeting. They should be made available to you. If not, please ask for a copy.

Discuss what will happen in case things don't work.

- What would you do contact the school?
- What would the school do contact you or speak to your child?
- What would your child do phone home or speak with someone at school?

Contact log:

It is important to keep all of your information together for easy reference, including records of whom you have spoken to, what correspondence you have sent and received etc.

Note details such as:

- Who did you contact?
- When did you contact them?
- How did you contact them (phone, e-mail, etc.)
- What was said?
- What did they say they would do for your child?
- When and how will they let you know what action has been taken?
- What did you say you would do?
- Do you need to contact them again?

Person you contacted:	Date:
Discussion:	
Plan:	
Person you contacted:	Date:
Discussion:	
Plan:	
Person you contacted:	Date:
Discussion:	
Plan:	
Person you contacted:	Date:
Discussion:	
Plan:	