

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 your child's experience.

This page aligns with Steps 1, 2 and 3 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: _____
