

# Steps to follow when you have a concern . . .

**W**hen you advocate on behalf of your child the way you express your concerns has an effect on the outcome.

- Do your best to control your emotions, be reasonable and respectful. The less defensive people act, the easier it is for them to listen to your concerns. You can provide information that will help professionals make a decision that meets the needs of your child.
- Consider the views of others. You may not agree, but by listening you will understand where they are "coming from" and where a solution might be found. When both sides are heard, it is easier to work together to find solutions.
- Document your information. It is easy to get confused or forget. Jot down notes, record the dates of meetings, phone calls, etc. Keep copies of everything you send and receive.
- Commit to resolution. Ensure you are working to solve the problem. Be honest with yourself and others. Plan how the problem will be solved. Think of the effect your suggested plan will have. Act in good faith; assume the best of others. Be both flexible and open-minded. Another plan might work or be even better.
- Stay involved. Confirm action plans and arrange for follow up. Help to define reasonable deadlines for each goal and ensure you and your child are part of the resolution's evaluation. If one solution is not working, try another. Plans must be workable.

## ***Q. I have a concern. What should I do?***

**A.** Act as soon as possible, do not let the problem get out of hand or remain unresolved. Listen carefully to what your child is saying. If you are uncomfortable seek advocacy. Try to understand all viewpoints on the issue. Do your best to look at the issue logically, leaving your emotions out of the picture for the time being. Determine clearly in your mind what the issue is. Establish what the facts are and what information may be missing. Begin to form questions. Request a meeting with the person directly involved at a mutually convenient time.

## ***Q. Where do I start if I have a concern or problem?***

**A.** Always start with the person directly involved. For example, if the problem is in the classroom a face-to-face meeting between teacher, support staff, parent and student may be the best approach. Most problems will be successfully solved at this level. (For further information refer to School District Regulation 9052: Process for Resolution of Concerns available at the school, the district board office, or on-line at [www.sd83.bc.ca](http://www.sd83.bc.ca))

## ***Q. Where do I go next?***

**A.** If your concerns are not addressed at this level, contact the individual's immediate supervisor. The vice-principal or principal will make every attempt to solve the problem at the school level and can help you contact appropriate people as necessary.

## ***Q. What if my problem cannot be solved at the school level?***

**A.** You may wish to speak to a Director of Instruction of the school district. If you are not satisfied, referral to the superintendent may be necessary.

## ***Q. Where would I go from here?***

**A.** You have the option of writing a letter to the school board or asking to make a formal presentation at a board meeting. The result of this appeal will be given to you in writing. (For further information refer to School District Regulation 9051: Student/Parent Appeals available at the school, the district board office or on-line at [www.sd83.bc.ca](http://www.sd83.bc.ca))

## ***Q. Would it be appropriate to ask the PAC for help?***

**A.** Perhaps. If concerns are of a general nature (not confidential issues) it may be brought up at a PAC meeting for discussion. However, if the issue is of a personal or personnel nature then it must be dealt with in private.

## ***Q. Could I contact the Ombudsman?***

**A.** Yes, however, the Ombudsman can only look at whether a fair process was followed by all parties, and if not, their action is restricted to recommendations only.

## **We Believe . . .**

### *Students . . .*

- . . . have the right to a safe environment and quality education.
- . . . have the responsibility to try and solve their own problems when possible and be good school citizens.

### *Parents . . .*

- . . . have the right to take part in their child's education and talk with the teacher.
- . . . have the responsibility to talk to the teacher directly and model socially acceptable behaviour.

### *Teachers . . .*

- . . . have the right to use professional judgement and be treated with proper protocol.
- . . . have the responsibility to teach in a professional manner and model socially acceptable behaviour.

### *Support Staff . . .*

- . . . have the right to use district procedures and be treated with proper protocol.
- . . . have the responsibility to work in a professional manner and model socially acceptable behaviour.

### *Administrators . . .*

- . . . have the right to use professional judgement and be treated with proper protocol.
- . . . have the responsibility to administer in a professional manner and model socially acceptable behaviour.

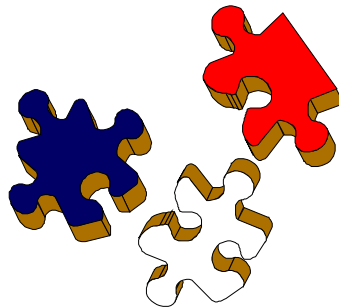
- . . . provide leadership, in consultation with staff and community, which reflects the expectations of parents and the school community and that is consistent with district and provincial guidelines.

### *All of us . . .*

- . . . have the right to be respected, be heard and be informed.
- . . . have the responsibility to treat each other fairly and with respect and to act on our own behalf.

## *Unity*

*I dreamed I stood in a studio  
And watched two sculptors there  
The clay they used was a young child's mind  
And they fashioned it with care.  
One was a teacher - the tools she used  
Were books, music and art.  
The other a parent, worked with a guiding hand  
And a gentle, loving heart.  
Day after day, the teacher worked with touch  
that was deft and sure,  
While the parent standing by her side  
Polished and smoothed it o'er  
And when at last the task was done  
They were proud of what they had wrought,  
For the things they had moulded into the child  
Could neither be sold nor bought  
And each agreed they would have failed  
If each had worked alone,  
For behind the teacher stood the school  
And behind the parent, the home.  
Author Unknown*



North Okanagan-  
Shuswap School  
District #83

# **Problem Solving Process**

***A PAMPHLET  
FOR PARENTS***