

BCCPAC AD HOC COMMITTEE – UNIVERSAL CONCERN/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The purpose of this document is to provide clear information to families regarding the process for resolving concerns/complaints at the school or district level, and to establish specific timelines for addressing formal complaints and appeals.

Part A – Seeking Information

1. It is recommended that parents/guardians and students refer to the “Speaking Up” booklet available on the BCCPAC website at <http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/resources/speaking> in regards to bringing forward concerns/complaints.
2. If you are concerned about something that is happening at your school’s PAC meetings you can contact your Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Chair or District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) Chair or contact the British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) at 1-866-529-4397.
3. Additionally, individuals are always welcome to contact the school Principal, Vice Principal or school district staff. On individual school district websites you may find resources and information regarding school district policies, procedures, and regulations.
4. BCCPAC has compiled an interactive listing of communication steps and resources associated to conflict resolution and can be found at <http://bccpacconflictresolutionresources.weebly.com/>

Part B – Bringing Forward Concerns

1. Verbally bring forward your concern with the individual(s) involved. Asking questions and seeking more information at this point can be very helpful in resolving your concern.
 - a) If you are not comfortable with addressing the individual(s) involved, direct your concern to the school principal or vice principal who will work with you to decide the best course of action to resolve the concern/complaint with the least amount of hardship for all concerned.
 - b) If the concern/complaint relates to the principal contact your school district superintendent or assistant superintendent.
2. Ask for resolution of the concern, and seek agreement on a timeline (in most circumstances) of not more than 5 business days with the party(ies) involved to resolve the concern.

3. If the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction, in the agreed upon timelines, or if mutually agreed to timelines cannot be established, the parent/guardian/student always has the option to submit a formal complaint under the terms of the districts complaints policy.

Part C – Formal Complaints

1. Parents/guardians/students may submit a formal written complaint at any time with the Principal, Vice-Principal, Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent. It must be stated clearly in writing that this is a formal complaint. You may also submit a copy to all members of the Board of Education.

Please ensure that the formal complaint notice includes:

- Date
- Name of the person to whom you are addressing the complaint.
- Nature of Complaint
- Possible resolution you are seeking
- Names of the people who will receive a copy of the complaint.
- Whether email is an acceptable form of communication for you

2. Once a formal complaint is submitted, the person to whom the complaint is addressed (the addressee) must acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 business days.

All parties involved must receive from addressee:

- a) Written notice of receipt of complaint.
- b) An overview of the steps that will be taken to resolve the complaint.
- c) A timeline for resolution that does not exceed 30 days from the date of receipt of complaint.

3. The school district Secretary-Treasurer, or an outside agency agreed upon by the Board of Education, must retain documentation relating to a formal written complaint and action taken in response to that complaint for a term not less than 2 years.

Part D – Appeals

1. If a resolution is not achieved in the 30 day maximum a parent/guardian/student may appeal to the district Board of Education.

Section 11 of the BC School Act can be found at this website:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/revisedstatutescontents.pdf>, and states:

“(7) A board must

- A) make a decision under this section within 45 days of the date on which the board receives the appeal, and
- B) promptly report that decision to the person making the appeal.”

2. Parents/guardians may appeal a decision of the board to the Superintendent of Achievement.

Section 11.1 to 11.4 of the BC School Act can be found at this website:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/student_appeals/superintendent.htm

Part E - Recommendations to be included in Procedure

1. The confidentiality of any individuals involved must be respected.
2. All conversations/meetings should be conducted in a respectful manner.
3. Recommend that when individuals first address a concern to ask questions with an open mind thus creating a positive atmosphere in which your concern may be discussed.
4. A parent/guardian/student may have a support person present at any meeting with school or school district officials.
5. Individuals should be offered the services of an interpreter when and where needed.
6. Documentation of past events including conversations and actions are recommended but are not required to bring forth concerns.
7. Every effort should be made to resolve issues of concern in “Part B-Bringing Forward Concerns”.
8. Parents/guardians/students may contact the Ministry of Education at educ.correspondence@gov.bc.ca at any time to discuss any concern that they may have and options for resolving any concern/conflict. This includes those concerns related to school district staff as well as the Board of Education.

Part F - Recommendations to Educational Partners

1. To change the name of Complaint Policies to Concern Policies as the word complaint has a

negative connotation.

2. Principals to have skills training in conflict resolution specifically tailored for the school context including those with parents, so that they have the skills, strategies and supports necessary to handle the wide variety of concerns or situations that may arise with insight and caring efficiency.
3. Create more opportunities where parents can work within a team and build a relationship with the teacher to support the child.
4. Create more avenues where parent input is heard and valued prior to a specific concern being raised.
5. Every effort should be made to resolve issues of concern in Part B-Bringing Forward Concerns.
6. Help create an open culture within the school community where parent, student or staff concerns are addressed and resolved as just another way of enhancing student learning opportunities and environments.

In Conclusion

the goal of this document is to support our students by encouraging individuals to find cooperative solutions to address concerns in a respectful, safe and timely manner.