

School District No. 35 (Langley)

Communicating With Your School



A Guide for Parents/Guardians and Students

Developed jointly by the Langley Board of Education
and the Langley District Parent Advisory Council

Staff in our schools are eager to address your questions or concerns. Education is shared between the home and the school, and good communication is an excellent starting point for resolving an issue.

Build a Positive Relationship with Your School

Be Involved:

- Support and work with your child's teacher(s)
- Participate in your school's Parent Advisory Council (PAC)
- Attend school events and activities
- Offer to help in the classroom
- Support your child's learning at home
- Stay informed of your child's progress in school

Communicate:

- Take opportunities to get to know the people who work with your child(ren)
- Ask your child about their school day
- Keep the school informed about issues that may affect your child. Don't wait for a small problem to become a large concern
- See what social media options are available to keep up-to-date on school activities

Resolving Issues and Concerns

- Arrange a phone appointment or in-person meeting so that your concerns can be heard without distraction (emailing to arrange a date and time works well).
- Organize your thoughts before the meeting. The BCCPAC Meeting Survival and Problem-Solving guides included in this pamphlet are provided by DPAC for your consideration.
- Keep focused on the issue. Remember, we are all here to ensure the success of your child.
- Treat others with dignity and respect, and expect that in return.
- Try to look at both sides of the issue and listen to everyone.
- Work with people at each step in the process to try and address your issue or concern before proceeding to the next step.

Parents and guardians are urged to contact the school if they are unsure of a message, or have questions about an activity or issue. It is usually best to begin with the classroom or subject teacher. The vast majority of issues or concerns are resolved at this stage. If you are not satisfied, then you may wish to contact the principal or counsellor to request assistance in dealing with the matter. A child's problem is best solved when the people closest to the problem work together to find a solution.

Issues or concerns that cannot be resolved through the school should be referred to the district office. The District is divided into two areas of responsibility, Zone One and Zone Two, with each zone overseen by an Assistant Superintendent. In addition, there are a variety of specialized staff at the district level with responsibility for areas such as special education, student services and transportation. Your issue or concern may be best dealt with by one of these people. Please see the list of “Key Contacts” on the back page.

Other sources of support and guidance are your Parent Advisory Council (PAC) or the District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC). Your school office can provide you with the names of your school’s PAC executive. Contact the School Board Office or visit www.langleydpac.ca for DPAC contact information and other useful links, including the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Council’s “Speaking Up! – A Parent Guide to Advocating for Students in Public Schools”.

Parents are always welcome to bring an advocate with them when meeting with school and/or district staff. PAC or DPAC members, other family members or even friends can be advocates when dealing with an issue or concern. The DPAC website contains further information on “Advocacy” and links to other resources to help with problem-solving.

Guidelines for Parents to Follow when there is an Issue or Concern

Step 1:

Start with the person whose action has given rise to the issue or concern.

Step 2:

If the issue is not resolved, contact the school’s principal, vice-principal or counsellor. Principals work hard to provide a learning environment where your child’s needs and the needs of other students are met.

Step 3:

If the issue is still not resolved, contact the School Board Office and speak with an Assistant Superintendent or District Principal.

Step 4:

If after working through the steps above you have not received a decision or you disagree with the decision, depending upon the nature of the issue you may be able to appeal to the Board of Education. Section 11 of the School Act gives parents and/or students the right to ask the Board of Education to review decisions that school employees make, or fail to make, that “significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student.” A copy of the District’s Appeal Policy can be found on our website at www.sd35.bc.ca under the “Board” tab. Copies are also available at the School Board Office and your school.

DISTRICT CONTACTS

Suzanne Hoffman, Superintendent of Schools 604-534-7891, ex 221
(Clare Pereira, Executive Assistant)

Claire Guy 604-534-7891, ex 225
Assistant Superintendent of Schools – Zone One
(Alice Boyd, Executive Assistant)

Aldergrove Community Secondary
Belmont Elementary
Brookwood Secondary
DW Poppy Secondary
Glenwood Elementary
Langley Fundamental Elementary
Lochiel U-Connect
North Otter Elementary
Peterson Road Elementary
Uplands Elementary

Alice Brown Elementary
Betty Gilbert Elementary
Coghlan Fundamental Elementary
Fort Langley Elementary
Langley Fine Arts
Langley Fundamental Middle/Secondary
Noel Booth Elementary
Parkside Centennial Elementary
Shortreed Elementary
Wix-Brown Elementary

Gord Stewart 604-534-7891, ex 221
Assistant Superintendent of Schools – Zone Two
(Clare Pereira, Executive Assistant)

Alex Hope Elementary
Blacklock Fine Arts Elementary
Dorothy Peacock Elementary
Gordon Greenwood Elementary
James Anderson Learning Centre
James Kennedy Elementary
Langley Meadows Elementary
Lynn Fripps Elementary
RC Garnett Elementary
Richard Bulpitt Elementary
Topham Elementary
West Langley Elementary

Apex Secondary
Coghlan Fundamental
Douglas Park Elementary
HD Stafford Middle
James Hill Elementary
Langley Education Centre
Langley Secondary
Nicomekl Elementary
RE Mountain Secondary
Simonds Elementary
Walnut Grove Secondary
Willoughby Elementary

Rose Janssen, Director – Learning Support Services 604-534-7891, ex 365
- Contact for Learning Support Services and Behaviour Programs Inquiries

Renge Bailie, Director – District Principal 604-534-7891, ex 250
- Contact for Safe Schools and Counselling Inquires

Michael Morgan, District Principal 604-534-7891, ex 231
- Contact for Aboriginal Programs Inquiries

Patti Johnson, Supervisor – Transportation Services 604-534-7891, ex 330
- Contact for Transportation/Bussing Inquiries

Mark Leiper 604-534-7891, ex 460
District Vice-Principal - International Student Program
- Contact for International Student Program Inquiries

J. David Green, Secretary-Treasurer 604-534-7891, ex 476
(Laurie Mason, Executive Assistant)

Lynda Reeve, Director – Human Resources 604-534-7891, ex 267
(Lori Tinney, Executive Assistant)

Our Core Values:

INTEGRITY

EXCELLENCE

COURAGE

COMMUNITY

Actions taken:

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 you contacted.
- When you contacted them.
- How? letter, telephone, fax, email, etc.
- What was said?
- What they said they would do for your child.
- When and how they will let you know what action has been taken.
- What you said you would do.
- Do you need to contact them again?

Person you contacted: _____ Date: _____

Action: _____

Outcome: _____

Person you contacted: _____ Date: _____

Action: _____

Outcome _____

Person you contacted: _____ Date: _____

Action: _____

Outcome _____

Person you contacted: _____ Date: _____

Action: _____

Outcome _____

Solving the problem

- What will best meet my child's needs?
- How will I know agreements are upheld?
- Who will be responsible?
- When will the action plan start?
- Who should I talk to if I have further concerns?

List some of your ideas for solving the problem(s).

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Other concerns/ideas:



BCCPAC Advocacy Project

BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

350-5172 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5H 2E8

Tel: 604-687-4433 • Fax: 604-687-4488 • Toll free: 1-866-529-4397 • www.bccpac.bc.ca



SELF-HELP GUIDE

Meeting Survival

Be wiser than other people, if you can, but do not tell them so.

Lord Chesterfield

Note details such as:

- Who is setting the agenda?
- How do I add topics?
- What is the meeting to accomplish?
- How much time do we have?
- Who is attending?
 - What is their role in the meeting?
 - How are they involved with my child?
 - What are their rights and responsibilities?
- Will a decision be made at this meeting?
 - Who are the decision-makers?
 - Will I have a say in the decision?
- What is my role in the meeting?
- Do I need more information on my child's:
 - Education goals?
 - Education activities?
 - Specific behaviours?
- What information do I have to support a good decision?
 - What questions do I want to ask?
 - What works well for my child?
 - What doesn't work well for my child?
 - What other concerns do I have to share?
- Are others looking to me for specific information on my child's:
 - Learning needs?
 - Emotional needs?
 - Health?
 - Safety?

The topic of the meeting is:

Note who will be attending the meeting:

I want to accomplish:

The information I need to participate effectively:



What resources might help me prepare for the meeting?

- “BCCPAC Speaking Up! A parent guide to advocating for students in public schools”
- BC College of Teachers Standards
- “Supporting Student Success: Working Together in BC Public Schools”
- School District policies
- School policies
- Fair Schools Report, Office of the Ombudsman
- Parent’s Guide to Individual Education Planning

Should I take a support person?

- Would it help me to have someone taking notes?
- Will I feel outnumbered or overwhelmed?
- Will I be able to stay on track?

It is important to include your child whenever possible.

Should my child attend?

- 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 OK with coming?

What does my child want taken into account?

During the meeting:

Have confidence in yourself!

You know your child and have important things 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 for your child.
- Openly share information that will lead to better decisions.
- If you do not understand – ask!

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 a 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 ensure a common understanding.

Put a plan in place in case things don’t work. Discuss:

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

Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret.

Ambrose Bierce



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