

## Parents' Education Rights and Responsibilities

Parents have important rights and responsibilities for their children's education.

Having a shared understanding of parents' rights and responsibilities can help everyone work together most effectively for the benefit of students.

### Parental Rights and All Schools

For students attending any type of school (public, independent, or First Nation schools), parents can expect to:

- ▶ be informed about and involved in making decisions that directly affect their children, including changes in the courses or programs they are enrolled in.
- ▶ be informed of all school policies, programs, rules, and routines.
- ▶ be consulted about and provide consent before any formal assessment of their children takes place, and be informed about the results.
- ▶ have their concerns listened to, with a prompt and respectful response.
- ▶ be able to speak to school staff, such as teachers, education assistants, or the principal, when they have questions or concerns or if they need information, and have a support person help them in meeting with school representatives if requested.
- ▶ receive regular and understandable reports about their children's progress.
- ▶ be involved in planning and reviewing their children's Individual Education Plan (IEP), if they have one.

## If Your Child Attends a Public School

**The *BC School Act* sets out rules for how public schools must operate, and it states that parents are entitled to:**

- ▶ be informed of their children's attendance, behaviour, and progress in school.
- ▶ receive annual reports about the general effectiveness of education programs.
- ▶ examine all records kept for their child.
- ▶ be consulted regarding the placement of children with disabilities and diverse abilities.
- ▶ be involved in the planning, development and implementation of their child's education program.
- ▶ belong to a parents' advisory council (PAC).

**In the public education system, a School Board oversees the operation of schools within each school district.**

- ▶ School Boards allocate the budget for all schools in the district, establish the policies and procedures for schools, and are responsible for ensuring that all decisions made by schools are fair.
- ▶ School Boards are led by a Superintendent of Schools.

**Parents of students who attend public schools have a right to:**

- ☐ be informed of School Board activities and decisions.
- ☐ attend School Board meetings.
- ☐ participate in parent advisory meetings of the district.
- ☐ ask for the school district's policies and procedures, and information about First Nations programs and services.
- ☐ contact School Board members, who are called Trustees, to share their concerns or ideas.
- ☐ run for a position on the School Board.

**Parents should also be aware that public School Boards must establish Codes of Conduct for schools within their district. School Boards must make their Codes of Conduct available to the public and provide them to students and parents. Boards must ensure Codes of Conduct outline:**

- ▶ types of discrimination that are not allowed in schools.
- ▶ what is acceptable behaviour and what is unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, and threatening or violent behaviours.

**Codes of Conduct must outline consequences for unacceptable behaviours. Those consequences should be restorative (meaning healing and renewing), and appropriate for students of various ages and unique support needs.**

**Remember that you have a right to see the school's Code of Conduct if you have a concern about how your child is being treated at school.**

## **Parental Rights to Confidentiality**

**All parents have the right to expect that their family's information will be treated confidentially by the school.**

**School staff have a professional obligation to share your information only with people directly involved in delivering education services to your child. This includes respecting the privacy of the following.**

- ▶ Your personal contact information
- ▶ Data about your child's progress in school, reports cards, etc.
- ▶ Information about whether your child has been assessed, for what purposes, and the results
- ▶ Information about your child's health status
- ▶ Any legal matters related to your child

**You should be asked to provide consent before your child's information is shared, including before it is transferred to another school.**

**BC's Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) also sets out rules for how information about you and your children can be collected, used, or shared. According to PIPA, you have a right to:**

- ▶ expect an organization to collect, use or disclose your personal information reasonably and appropriately.
- ▶ know who in the organization is responsible for protecting your personal information.
- ▶ expect that your personal information will be protected through appropriate security measures.
- ▶ complain about how an organization handles your personal information if a problem arises.

**If you have concerns about how your information is being handled, ask questions. Schools must let you know what policies and procedures are in place to protect the privacy of you and your children.**

**You can also take your concerns to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia if you have a serious complaint. The Office states that:**

- ▶ You should try to settle the matter directly by contacting the person responsible for managing privacy issues within the organization.
- ▶ If you are not satisfied with the organization's response, you may ask the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of BC to review the matter.

**For more information or advice on how to proceed, you can contact:**

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia

**E-mail:** [info@oipc.bc.ca](mailto:info@oipc.bc.ca)

**Web Site:** [www.oipc.bc.ca](http://www.oipc.bc.ca)

**Telephone:** (250) 387-5629

## Parental Responsibilities

**In addition to their rights, parents have very important responsibilities, including the following.**

- ☐ Ensure your children attend school regularly.
- ☐ Help make sure your children follow school policies, programs, rules, and procedures.
- ☐ Share your concerns openly, clearly, and immediately with appropriate school representatives.
- ☐ Respond to requests from the school for help in supporting your children's learning.
- ☐ Share your understandings about things that are going well for your children, and things that need to improve. You know your children best. Your knowledge is crucial for planning their education.