



# EMPOWERING PARENTS: A GUIDE TO ADDRESSING CONCERNS IN MANITOBA SCHOOLS



April 2015

# Empowering Parents: A Guide To Addressing Concerns in Manitoba Schools

## Introduction

This guide was created in response to many conversations with parents and our educational partners. Parents of students attending schools in Manitoba sometimes feel like they need help in understanding how to address a concern in their school communities. ***Empowering Parents: A Guide to Addressing Concerns in Manitoba Schools*** is a starting point for parents to work towards resolving these concerns. It provides parents with ideas, tools, and directions to address concerns and find an agreeable solution for everyone involved. While the content of this guide is universal in its basic philosophies, some of the processes may differ between funded and non-funded independent schools and public schools in Manitoba. If you have a concern involving process and policies involving an independent school, please refer to that school or its board of directors for additional information and clarity.

In this guide, the term ‘Parent’ represents all parents and caregivers of children attending school in Manitoba, and Parent Advisory Council – or PAC - represents any parent group operating within a school community. This includes Advisory Councils for School Leadership (ACSL), Parent Councils, Home and School Associations, Parent Groups, or any variation of names which may be used.

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***While it is the intent of the Guide to assist parents in resolving a concern, there are also additional formal processes and authorities available to help parents.***

## ***Brief History of the MAPC Advocacy Project***

The MAPC Advocacy Project (MAPCAP) was started in 1999 through the effort of two dedicated volunteers for MAPC, based on a similar model created in British Columbia. Originally, the Project was created to train volunteers to assist parents with concerns they were facing within their respective school communities. The situations parents were facing ranged in complexity, with results varying from a quick 10 minute phone call to longer conversations stretching out over days or even weeks. The concerns included: working with schools to develop an IEP (Individual Education Plan), bullying, understanding a school suspension, transportation concerns, lunch program concerns, and many more. Sometimes the cases even involved helping one parent to work out a strategy to work with another parent on a Parent Advisory Council!

As we approach **20** years of helping families, our goals have expanded to include empowering parents to advocate on behalf of their child and themselves, teaching parents about using a defined process to work towards achieving a resolution to a concern they are experiencing, and learning to collaborate with their school communities to ensure a rich experience and respectful partnership for all. MAPC also works with school administrators and other education partners to share stories of what parents are sometimes experiencing in a school community and what proactive and preventive measures can be put in place to ensure that communication is clear and parental concerns are *heard* and *understood*.

By working collaboratively with parents, education partners, stakeholders, and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, MAPC will continue to ensure that the concerns parents experience continue to be shared and new strategies explored to address concerns as they arise.

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## Section 1: Parental Advocacy

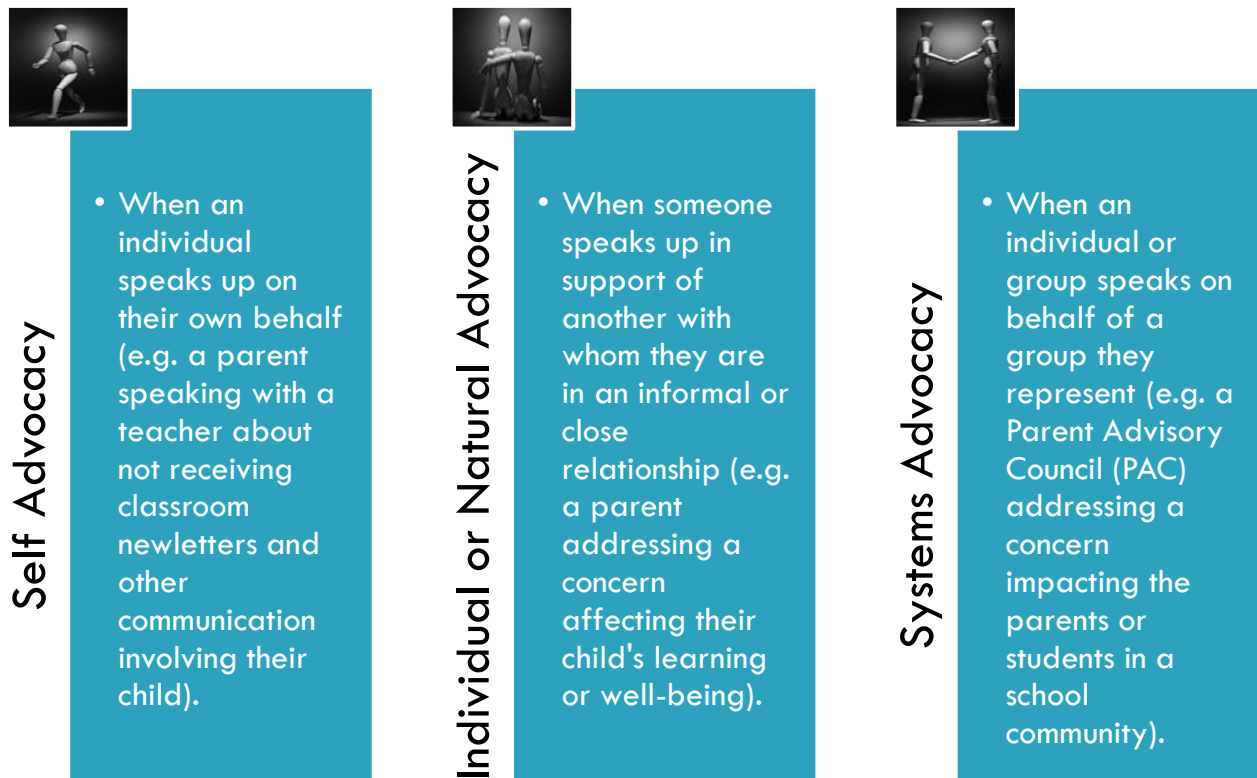
### What is Parental Advocacy?

MAPC defines parental advocacy as, **“speaking up for yourself or others,”** and recognizes it as a process used for resolving a concern involving a student, parent, or group of parents in a school community. (MAPC, 2004)

One goal of MAPC is to provide resources and support to parents when they need help resolving a concern with a Manitoba school. .

As your child’s parent, **you** are your child’s best advocate. You know how they manage concerns, what strategies work best at home when concerns present themselves, their likes and dislikes, and how you can best support their needs. No one knows your child as well as you do, which is what makes you a **natural advocate** for your child.

### MAPC Recognizes Three Types of Parental Advocacy (MAPC 2004)



Students and their parents might face any number of concerns within a school community where they could act in the role of either a self, individual, or systems advocate. The process for each type of advocacy is similar with the only difference being *who is doing the advocating for whom*.

Consider some of the following questions to identify the concern you are faced with and how you wish to proceed.

1. What is bothering me/my child?
2. Why is it bothering me/my child? Does it impact our value system? Or, is it a matter involving our interests?
3. How does it make me/my child feel?
4. When did it start?
5. How long has it been going on?
6. Who is involved?
7. What will happen if I don't address the concern?
8. Is this is an issue my child can work out on their own.
9. Should I step in to assist with the concern?
10. Should I raise my concern with my child's teacher or principal?

*To help you with the process of sorting your thoughts, feelings and possible actions to consider, please refer to the Self Help Guide in the Appendices section of this guide.*

Whatever action you might choose to follow, consider your strengths when working with the school system to plan your path towards resolution.

1. Do you have the **communication skills** you need to address the concern? Do you need help with writing a letter or an email? Do you have a *support person* to help you compose your thoughts and ideas?
2. Do you have the **time** needed to address the concern? Most concerns can be resolved with a quick phone call to the teacher. Other concerns may take more time to sort out (e.g. meetings with school staff and other parties). Do you have space in your schedule to accommodate these meetings?

## RESOLUTION

*Resolution is defined as, "the act of finding an answer or solution to a conflict or a problem"*

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resolution>. (Merriam-Webster:

An Encyclopædia Britannica Company )

*MAPC understands resolution as being the solution that a family wishes to work towards to solve a problem they are experiencing. Often, parents can be clear about the problem, but sometimes have difficulty deciding how it can be resolved. By having one or more possible solutions in mind, parents can have a starting point for a conversation to address the concern.*

3. Is **fear** something you need to consider when trying to work towards a resolution? Are you comfortable working with and speaking to school staff? Is *retribution* a concern? Are school staff members comfortable speaking with you? Do you have a **support person** to help you through this?
4. Are you **confused** with school and school division policies? Do you know where to find them? Do you need help sorting through them?

Working with a school system when you have a concern maybe frustrating. It is important to remember it is a policy driven system with a [line of communication](#) and steps that must be followed to address concerns.

**MAPC is here to help you to sort out what steps can be taken and determine what course of action will work best for you and your family.**

Remember, this is your child, your family, and your concern to consider – there may not be one absolute ‘correct’ way to address the concern and the resolution you seek must be personal and appropriate for you.

## RETRIBUTION

**Retribution is defined as “punishment for doing something wrong”.**

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/retribution>. (Merriam-

Webster: An Encyclopædia Britannica Company)

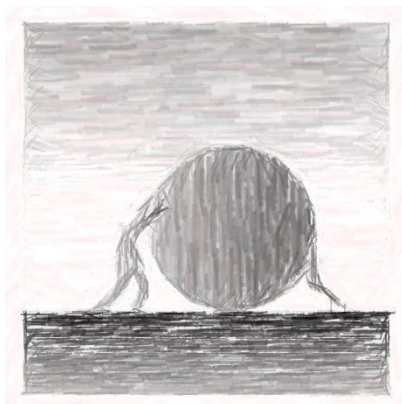
*Retribution is a concern parents and students often worry about. They might express concerns about being treated differently, being identified in the school community as a ‘troublemaker’, being denied opportunities to participate in school events, or being watched unnecessarily. From experience, MAPC believes that it is best to discuss the possibility of retribution with all of the parties involved and agree on how to address it, should it become a problem.*



## Section 2: What Should I Do?

Conflict is a natural part of life. Parents engage in conflict on a daily basis as they guide a toddler or a teenager through life. Remember trying to get them to pick up their toys?

Navigating the school system can be a stressful time for parents, so it's safe to assume that conflict will happen – whether intentionally or not.



Many people are uncomfortable with conflict, especially when they feel they are in an unbalanced power situation – such as speaking with a teacher, principal, or superintendent. It often helps to remember five things which can help you to feel the power is more balanced and a positive relationship is possible:

- 1) *Educators are human and therefore subject to the same stresses and concerns as you. They have mortgages to pay, cars that need repairing, and pets that occasionally get into the garbage.*
- 2) *Educators are often parents as well, so they can often relate to the concerns you and your child are facing.*
- 3) *Educators entered their profession because they believe in education, they like children, and they want to make a difference in the lives of the children they teach.*
- 4) *Parents are their child's first teacher and therefore know their child best. Teachers can be like a second parent and know their students very well, but in very different ways.*
- 5) *Educators are just as interested in resolving a concern as you are.*

Every individual comes with a different set of communication styles, experiences, understandings, and perceptions. It can be helpful to consider what your

### SELF-AWARENESS

*You might believe that you react to conflict in a certain way, but how do others see you?*

*Ask your support person to share their thoughts on how you react to conflict.*

*Discuss a time you were involved in a small conflict and how you reacted to it.*

*Is it a different picture than you imagined?*

*It is important to understand that another person's understanding of a situation and your reaction to it can impact the outcome. Even though you may see yourself as reacting to conflict in one way, someone else may have seen it differently.*

*Consider also, that your understanding of how the other person is reacting might affect the outcome.*

approach and attitudes are towards conflict and what supports you need to have in place before engaging in conversations to address a concern.

For instance, do you avoid conflict because you are uncomfortable drawing attention to yourself? Are you collaborative and try to work on finding solutions together with others involved in a situation? Are you more assertive and want solutions **now**?

Carefully consider what is under your control to address, what isn't under your control, and who or what might be needed to help. This way, you may be able to work towards a positive outcome to any conflict you experience.

## Where to Start...

In this section, we have created a list of tools to help address the concern you are facing. For simplicity, we make reference to the most commonly used resources which can be researched further with your respective school, school division, or Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. You can also contact MAPC and we would be happy to help you find the information you need!

We'll start with the idea that MAPC supports that parents who are addressing a concern should have the opportunity to:

1. **Be heard and present evidence.** A parent should not be surprised by any decision being made involving their child and should have the opportunity to address it.
2. **Know the facts** and how a decision has been – or will be – made concerning their child.
3. **Ensure that the decision maker is unbiased.** The person making the decision should not have an involvement or set of beliefs which could compromise their ability to make a fair decision.

More simply, these understandings state that you should be given the chance to address the concern you are facing, that you should be given the opportunity to ask questions and understand what has been – or will be – done about this concern, and that the decision-maker (e.g. Principal, Superintendent, etc.) should act in an unbiased manner – or appoint another person who is not biased - during the decision making process.

## What You Should Know...

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning has a resolution process in place for programming or placement of students with Individual Education Plans, as defined in the [Public Schools Act](#). (Manitoba: The Public Schools Act. C.C.S.M.c P250). The document *Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: A Formal Dispute Resolution Process* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2006) is available online at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/pdf/FormalDRProcess.pdf>. (Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: A Formal Dispute Resolution Process, 2006)

As noted in [Working Together: A Guide to Positive Problem Solving for Schools, Families and Communities](#). (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004), the most logical approaches to informally addressing a concern are *problem solving, negotiation, and conciliation*.

**Problem solving** – involves people working together in a voluntary and co-operative way to overcome their differences. It allows for flexibility and idea sharing and is dedicated to finding a solution that works for everyone. The parties work out a solution by themselves and no third party involvement is required.

**Negotiation** – is similar to problem solving, but the parties involved usually have a solution in mind when they enter the conversation and end up working together to find a common area of agreement between them to resolve the concern.

**Conciliation** – is a process that involves a third party to help guide the process. The third party is neutral, trusted by everyone involved, and does not choose anyone's side. They help guide the conversation to identify the issues, find common ground and shared goals, and look for solutions.

### **The Line of Communication**

*The Line of Communication may also be referred to in school division policy as a **complaints process, appeal process, concern protocol**, or other names within school division policies.*

*Following the [line of communication](#) will help you to find the person most responsible in the school division to help you with your concern. If you choose not to follow the process, you may become frustrated trying to get answers, or direction, from the wrong person.*

*Occasionally, a parent might not be comfortable dealing with the 'right' person in the line of communication. In those cases it may be appropriate to speak to the next person in line.*

## Where Should You Begin?

Generally speaking, a parent should start with the person most directly involved with the concern. For example, if you have a concern with something that took place in the classroom, you would speak first to the classroom teacher.

Understanding the [line of communication](#) in Manitoba schools is essential in working to resolve a concern in a school community. This line of communication should be followed in this order:

1. **Classroom Teacher** (Responsible for providing educational programming and working with parents to achieve that goal)
2. **Principal** (Responsible for running the school and overseeing the learning environment including safety, discipline of students, and care and maintenance of the building)
3. **Superintendent** (Responsible for providing leadership in all matters relating to education in the school division)
4. **School Board** (Responsible for determining school policy and overseeing its implementation. The divisional school board is generally accepted as the 'final word' on school division concerns)
5. **Education Administration Services/Dispute Resolution Coordinator** (Education Administration Services can provide assistance to parents on government policy and legislation. The Dispute Resolution Coordinator assists parents with concerns involving programming and placement for students with IEPs)

**Note:** The Minister of Education and Advanced Learning is responsible for creating provincial direction for education and will refer concerns to appropriate personnel in the Department or other stakeholder groups when appropriate. The Minister does not provide input on local decision making process) ([Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004](#))

## Who else might be able to help?

*Other supports you might want to include in the [line of communication](#) (depending on the nature of your concern) include resource teachers, guidance counsellors, community support workers, and divisional student services personnel.*

*Resource Teacher or Divisional Student Services Administrators are often part of the process when dealing with programming for students with special needs.*

Speaking with school staff such as educational/teaching assistants about a concern is not appropriate. Teachers and principals are the only staff with the authority to resolve student based concerns and communicate with parents. If you are unsure about the appropriate person to approach, contact the MAPC office!

## Remember to follow the Line of Communication!



Classroom  
Teacher

Principal

Superintendent

School Board/Board of  
Trustees/Manitoba Education

Manitoba Education Administrative  
Services/Dispute Resolution Coordinator

*Other supports which may be included in the process: resource  
teachers, community support workers, and divisional student  
services personnel*

## School and Divisional Expectations

Improving your knowledge of the school, school division, and school system in Manitoba will help to increase your understanding of, as well as give you the confidence to work with, Manitoba schools.

Some useful resources to use when addressing a conflict in a school community include; school and division mission statements, school and divisional policies concerning the specific concern, school and divisional codes of conduct for students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders, and the [Public Schools Act](#) and the [Education Administration Act](#). MAPC refers to these items as *legitimizers* – meaning they bring legitimacy to the conversation when addressing an item of concern.

These resources are tools that can help you in presenting your concern.

You can find these items by contacting your school or division, or locating them on your local school or school division website.

**MAPC is also available to assist with your research!**

### *Helpful Hint!*

*Sometimes misunderstandings (or greater understandings) can be addressed by taking the time to review your child's **Cumulative Learning File (CUM File) and Pupil Support File (sometimes referred to as the Student File).***

*As a parent, it is your right to review these files and request photocopies of any documents contained within.*

***You cannot remove any documents.***

*This can create an opportunity to understand your child's education journey. Any questions about the file can be answered by the school principal.*

For further understanding, we have provided some **generic examples** and questions you might ask yourself if you were to use these tools to discuss a school safety issue (just as an example)

### **Mission Statement Example**

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*“Our school community is dedicated to treating every citizen with respect and care while providing a rich learning experience for all learners”.*

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#### **Ask yourself:**

Is your child feeling disrespected? Will drawing attention to words such as “rich experience”, “citizen” or “respect” help you or your child to address the concern?

### **School Policy Example**

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*“Our School Division believes that the best learning takes place in a safe and respectful environment. We support healthy personal and social development for everyone. We believe that all members of the school community have the right to an environment free from bullying in all its forms. Bullying behavior will be taken seriously with supports provided for everyone involved.”*

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#### **Ask yourself:**

If your child is a victim of bullying, or perhaps is the bully, could using this policy help you to discuss your understanding and expectations with the school and agree on what supports can be provided for him/her?

### **Code of Conduct Example**

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*Our school division will promote the development of beliefs and attitudes which foster an environment of safety while behaving in a concerned and respectful manner.*

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#### **Ask yourself:**

Are members of the school community following this code of conduct? What understandings have to be clarified? These are important discussions which parents should engage in when facing a concern!

## Manitoba Public Schools Act Example

**47.1.2(1)** *A person who is subject to a duty under subsection 47.1.1(1) must, if they become aware that a pupil of a school may have*  
*(a) engaged in cyberbullying; or (b) been negatively affected by cyberbullying;*  
*report the matter to the principal of the school as soon as reasonably possible.*

### Ask yourself:

Are members of the school community following the Manitoba Public Schools Act? What understandings do you need clarified? What discussions need to take place between you and members of the school community?

Take the time to define the terms *respect* and *appropriate behavior* with your school community. What is considered respectful or appropriate to one person may not be understood as such to another.

## Role of a Parent Advisory Council in Addressing Concerns

Sometimes, when upset or angry, parents approach the parent council – or a representative of the parent council – to voice their concern about an issue they are facing.

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) can be a useful resource to learn about the school system. However, because privacy legislation and protection of individuals takes precedence over all matters, the PAC cannot be used to address two items:

1. **Individual student behavior or discipline** – a student's behavior or discipline is a confidential matter that must remain between the school staff and the student's family.
2. **Staff behavior or discipline** involving individual teachers or other staff – a staff member's behaviour or discipline is a confidential matter that must remain between the staff member and their employer (the school/school division).

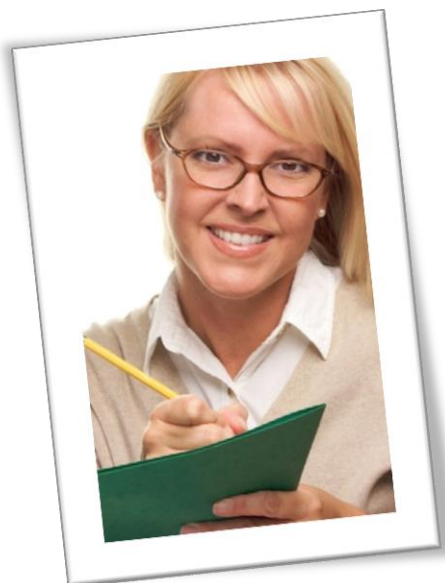




**There is an obligation for the school to investigate all concerns, but the results of that investigation will not be shared with anyone other than the parties being investigated.**

**Members of a PAC** should know how the education system works, including the [line of communication](#). When parents from the community approach the PAC members (as they often will, being recognized as ‘leaders’ in the parent community) they may be able to assist in determining the appropriate direction needed to address their concern.

**For more information about the provincial rights and expectations for parent councils in Manitoba schools, please contact MAPC or visit the following websites:**



**Advisory Councils for School Leadership (ACSL) Regulation:**

[http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/admin/school\\_admin.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/admin/school_admin.pdf)

**Parent Groups for Schools:**

<https://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/40-2/pdf/b014.pdf>

(Manitoba: The Education Administration

Amendment and Public Schools Amendment Act (Parent Groups for Schools), Bill 14, 2nd Sess., 40th Leg., 2012)

*Parent Advisory Councils will often identify a concern needing to be addressed because of the impact on students and families in the community. These concerns might include: operation of lunch or breakfast programs, policies concerning fundraising and student activities, school safety issues, parental and education supports for engaged student learning and more. The PAC is expected to work in collaboration with the school or division to address the concern and possibly strategize how to move the concern to the next appropriate steps. Your local school board can tell you what process it needs to follow to meet with you formally.*

## How Should You Prepare Yourself?

### Have a Solution in Mind

It can be easy to identify a concern, but difficult to determine how it can be resolved.

How would you like to see the concern addressed? If you don't know, your concern may not be resolved to your satisfaction.

Before meeting with someone to share your concern, think of solutions that might work for you.

If you are able to identify ideas to resolve the concern, you have a starting place for conversation.

Your solution may not end up being accepted as is, but at least it was considered in determining what will work for everyone involved.

### Should I include my child?

While communication with your child is critical to resolving the concern, it is important for you, as the parent, to determine whether it is appropriate to include them in the discussion process. MAPC encourages parents to carefully consider the age and stage of development of your child to determine what information is important to share and how that information should be shared.

Remember – the behaviour you engage in today will impact the way that your child works with concerns in the future.

### Enlisting a Support Person

Working to resolve a concern can be stressful, so MAPC recommends having a support person, or system, in place. Your support person can be a spouse, a parent, or a trusted friend.

They can help you:

- to identify your strengths
- provide feedback as you prepare for meetings
- provide emotional support if you need it
- offer suggestions regarding your body language and tone of voice when preparing for a meeting.
- practice what you would like to say
- with research
- by possibly attending meetings with you

**\* Support Persons are legal rights for the development of Individual Education Plans (IEP) .\***

If you choose to have a support person join you in a meeting, explain to the other party (or parties) that this person is attending the meeting to: 1. assist with taking notes, 2. remind you of important points you wish to cover, 3. help you to manage your emotions, or 4. assist with understanding language or culture.



## Documenting and Note-taking

Once you know the process you need to follow, you must put the facts together about the concern. The facts include the details of the concern and what you have done to try to resolve it.

Your notes can be kept in one notebook, rather than many pieces of paper which could be misplaced or lost. It's not necessary to record every word said, but rather record a summary of what was discussed. Keep track of names, dates, events (or incidents), as well as the actions you have taken, as they happen so you don't forget details later.

The [MAPC Self Help Guide](#) can also provide some additional ideas for documenting and note taking considerations.

### *Helpful Hint!*

*If you decide to use another parent from the same school community as your support person, try to avoid discussing your concern in public places, such as soccer games and hockey rinks. You might also consider carefully what is being discussed around the dinner table. You may lose credibility if everyone knows more about your concern (including your child) than the people who can possibly help solve it.*

## Preparing an Agenda

If you have arranged a meeting time and date to discuss the concern, it's a good idea to prepare and share an agenda in advance listing the points you wish to discuss.

This serves two purposes:

1. It allows the other party time to prepare in advance any information, data and documents they may need for the discussion. This saves each of you time and additional meetings in the future
2. It allows you a method to organize your thoughts and ideas in advance, so the most important items you need to cover will have time to be covered. The MAPC [Meeting Preparation Form](#) may help with organizing your thoughts.

It is also appropriate for you – as your child's parent and advocate – to request an agenda from anyone requesting to meet with you about items affecting your child, using the same reasoning that is listed above.

### *Helpful Hints!*

*Keep track of phone calls and emails in the order that they happen so you have a complete record of what conversations took place – and a corresponding timeline – for later reference.*

*If you are taking notes during a conversation, it is a courtesy to let the person you are speaking with know that you are taking notes to review at a later time. You might also want to consider sharing the notes as a gesture of being open and transparent.*

Remember to respect the time offered to meet with someone. No one likes to be rushed, but sometimes you may run out of time to discuss everything.

If items need additional time for better understanding – or because information was not available - request that another meeting be arranged at a time that is agreeable for each of you.

## Who Should You Speak to and What Should You Say?

### Consider first, the Pros and Cons of Types of Communication

The method you choose to communicate can either clarify or complicate your concern depending on how it is used. Some pros and cons of the following communication methods will help you decide which approach is most suitable.

#### Phone Calls

##### PROS

Phone calls are quick and efficient and may clear up a concern before it becomes a conflict. Phone calls allow for conversation and the chance to develop understanding in one short transaction.

##### CONS

Phone messages that are left may not be answered in a timely manner. Body language cannot be used to assist in clear communication to prevent misunderstandings.

##### HINT

*Avoid leaving multiple phone messages over a short period of time when you are waiting for an answer to your questions or concerns. Instead, leave a time or date that you expect to receive a response by and advise that you will follow up if you have not heard from them by that time.*

*When you do speak with the other party, ask if this is a good time to talk about your concern or arrange a time that is agreeable for each of you.*

#### Emails

##### PROS

Emails are quick and efficient. Emails can allow you more time to develop your thoughts when a large amount of information is required.

##### CONS

Emails can be misunderstood because there are no other communication clues such as tone or body language to help in understanding what is being said. What one party might consider professional in writing, another party might consider as confrontational or

aggressive. An email chain involving many people might become excessive during a 'back and forth' transaction, or more complicated due to the number of people involved.

#### HINT

*Never send an email when you are upset or angry. Instead, consider waiting for 24 hours before sending it – if it is appropriate. You might also have your support person review the email before sending it, to provide additional feedback regarding the tone and word choice being used.*

Consider whether sending a letter as an email attachment might help with its timeliness.

**Be sure to include a title in your subject line and reference the letter within the body of the email as well.**

### **Ground mail**

#### PROS

Composing a letter requires more time to clarify your thoughts and communicate clearly, which might allow you more time to process facts rather than feelings. When received, correspondence is normally recorded and presented in a more formal manner, which can assist in demonstrating a clear timeline of action requests. Letter writing can also be seen as being more committed to resolving a concern.

#### CONS

Writing a letter may be less efficient when time concerns are critical. An additional expense for postage or courier may have to be considered.

#### HINT

*Writing can sometime have a calming effect when you are upset or emotional. Plan to rewrite your letter a couple of times before sending and be aware of the tone.*

### **Face to Face Meetings**

**Request time for a meeting as far in advance as possible so everyone can confirm their ability to attend!**

#### PROS

Meeting face to face can be helpful in providing an opportunity to discuss a concern before it becomes a conflict. For more formal concerns, face to face meetings allow for both parties to work towards greater clarity through the use of verbal and non-verbal (body language and tone) communication. Face to face meetings allow for conversation so misunderstandings are often cleared up quickly.

### CONS

Face to face meetings can be difficult to coordinate and may be too short in duration for a thorough discussion. They may also be uncomfortable if there is a perceived power imbalance or emotions are high.

### HINTS

*Practicing what you will say in advance often helps in preparing for a face to face meeting if the topic is difficult. Write down your main points in advance and practice with your support person, or in front of a mirror. If you are concerned about becoming angry or emotional, consider having a trusted support person attend the meeting with you. Taking a break during the meeting or arranging another meeting time is also an option you might want to consider.*

If you are upset or angry when a concern occurs, consider waiting 24 hours to make the phone call or send the email so you can present yourself in the best manner possible and avoid saying or doing something you might later regret.

**\*\* USING COMMON COURTESY AND RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE  
WILL HELP YOUR CONVERSATION. AVOID NAME-CALLING, SHOUTING,  
SWEARING, THREATS, OR ANY TYPE VERBAL ABUSE \*\***

## Clarifying Your Goals

*Always keep your goals in mind as you communicate.*

It is important to organize your thoughts and clarify your goals before communicating with someone to address a concern. Some important considerations you should think about include:

- What is the specific concern that is being addressed? *What are the facts, not the feelings?*
- What does the other party need to know? *Why is it a concern? When did it start? How long has it been going on? Who is involved?*
- What would you like to see happen to resolve this concern? *(Having a solution in mind will allow you to work with the school to determine a course of action to ensure your child's needs are met)*
- What follow up is needed?

You can also use the [MAPC Self Help Guide](#) to assist in sorting out your thoughts.

Good communication skills are valuable in all aspects of home, school, and career. Take some time to consider your skills in both listening and responding to ensure clear communication and understanding when addressing a concern.

## Improving Your Listening and Responding Skills

Difficult conversations can sometimes cause us to become angry, frustrated, upset, or confused about information that is being shared. Take some time to reflect on your communication style and what you can do to ensure that you understand the conversation you are participating in. Some additional tools you might also consider using include:



1. *Taking notes* – writing down the main points will help you to stay focused and remember questions that might come up later. Be brief so you can concentrate on the conversation!
2. *Keeping an open mind and separating the issue from the person* – keep your concern at the centre of the conversation rather your personal feelings about the person you might be speaking with – especially when you are upset or angry.
3. *Indicating you are listening and staying focused on understanding* – have a strategy in place to prevent becoming distracted during a conversation. Make eye contact or verbally express your understanding during the conversation. Take notes or have prepared notes to keep your focus. Make sure children are occupied while you are in a meeting or on the phone.
4. *Using 'I' rather than 'you' messages* – Careful use of the word 'I' can help in a tense situation, rather than the word 'you' which can sometimes sound accusatory and causes a defensive reaction.

Consider the following examples and alternate choice of statements:

Example	A better statement might be...
"You made a mistake on Billy's report card and you need to fix it!"	<b>"I have a concern about Billy's report card that I believe needs to be clarified."</b>
"You never called me to discuss Sally's attendance. You must have the wrong number."	<b>"I never received a call to discuss Sally's attendance, may I check what phone number is being used?"</b>



5. *Seeking further information when you are unclear* – it is important to ask questions if you are unclear about something being shared with you. If you don't understand a point, ask for clarification – otherwise it will be assumed that you do understand.
6. *Don't interrupt when someone else is speaking.*
7. *Summarize, don't criticize* - confirm the key points that have been shared with you to ensure that you are in agreement with what has been discussed. Determine what the next steps or actions will be to move forward.
8. *Practice* – use listening skills whenever an opportunity presents itself. The more you do it, the better you will become.

### *Using the Media – good or bad idea?*

Sometimes, when a parent feels unheard, they consider using the media to voice their concern.

**MAPC does not recommend using the media as it does little to solve a concern.**

If you are considering using the media ask yourself the following questions before contacting them:

- Will the media portray me in the way that I see and know myself?
- Will they portray my concern in a fair and unbiased manner?
- Will I be exposing my family, child, or community to positive, or negative, public criticism?
- How will media exposure impact my relationship with my school community?
- Are there any other avenues that I might explore to help address the concern?

If you feel that there may be other ways to resolve the concern that you may not have considered, contact MAPC to assist with your research.



## What Next?

### Follow up

After every meeting – whether by phone, email, or face to face – it is important to list what actions will be taken to resolve the concern, who is the person responsible for each action (including yourself), and what the timeline will look like to complete each action. Once these timelines have passed (allowing everyone the chance to complete their work), it is a good idea to either: a) check in to see how things are going and that the concern is continuing to be resolved, or b) set up another meeting to plan your next steps.

Once the concern has been successfully addressed – or resolved. An occasional ‘check in’ with the involved parties might be appropriate to help ensure that your relationships with the school community continue to be positive and that the concern doesn’t recur.

### Formal Dispute Resolution

As noted in [\*Working Together: A Guide to Positive Problem Solving for Schools, Families and Communities\* \(Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004\)](#) that formal dispute resolution may become necessary when people in the dispute feel they cannot resolve the issue by themselves. Formal processes are used for children in schools who are experiencing concerns involving Appropriate Education, and normally have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in place. Formal Dispute Resolution can include mediation, arbitration/adjudication, or legal recourse. Each of the processes involves an outside third party such as a mediator, judge, or jury. Formal dispute resolution should only be used when all other avenues – including using the [line of communication](#) in the school system – have been exhausted.

### Making the Hard Decisions

While one goal of MAPC is to assist parents with resolving a concern within a school community, sometimes, despite everyone’s best efforts, a concern cannot be resolved to a parent’s satisfaction. A difficult decision then has to be made. This is a good time to reflect on the options available to you, and one of your first questions should be, “As a family, are we able to live with the situation as it currently stands?”

This is a highly personal decision. Only you – as your child’s greatest champion and advocate - know what is best for your child, yourself, and your family. Consider some of the following options and whether or not they might address the concern:

**Homework Assistance/Tutoring** – If the concern involves providing additional supports for your child and the school is unable or unwilling to provide them, parental help with homework assistance or outside tutoring might be an option you wish to explore.

**Changing Schools/Schools of Choice** – Some families believe that the answer to a concern they are facing is to change schools and get a fresh start. It is important to know first, whether the school you wish to switch to is within your school division (there may be a fee attached to attend an independent school) and whether the school is outside your catchment area (the immediate area surrounding the school which includes your home). Factors such as transportation and enrollment numbers at the school you are considering may impact your child's ability to attend. Carefully consider all details before deciding to switch, including having a conversation with the school's principal, as switching schools may not resolve the concern you are experiencing. A request to enroll at a school of choice must be completed before **the middle of May** of each year. More information can be found at

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/schools/choice/index.html>

**Homeschooling** – Sometimes families may choose to homeschool their child to address a concern that could not be resolved in their school. While there are many supports available to parents who choose to homeschool, it is important to note that **homeschooling, including all costs, is the responsibility of the family**. *No government funding is available and homeschooling families must submit annual program outlines and progress reports to the Homeschooling office of Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning.* More information can be found at

[http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/schools/ind/home\\_sch.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/schools/ind/home_sch.html).

## Reflecting on our Relationships

As parents, we are expected to model the behavior we hope to see in all children involved in our school community. As adults, we know that we will experience conflict with other people and that life will be filled with concerns that need to be addressed.

How we address these concerns demonstrates to our children our hopes and expectations of how they will react to concerns and conflicts they will face in the future. Some questions you might want to ask yourself as you come to the conclusion of addressing your concern might include:



- What have I learned from this experience? Is there an age appropriate “teachable moment” I can share with my child, which will help them in their future when they are facing a conflict?
- Do I need to apologize for something I have said or done, which might help to repair a relationship in my child’s school community? What might that apology look like? What closure might a sincere apology from me to the other party give to me and my family?
- Can I forgive an action, which was made against me or my child, either with or without a corresponding apology, towards the other party? What closure might forgiveness towards the other party give to me and my family?

No matter what the outcome is, it is in your control to decide how you will proceed from this point on.

## Section 3: Additional Information and Resources

Parents can also consider the following organizations and agencies to learn more about Manitoba schools and other supports which may be useful to them.

### Alternative Education Options

#### ***Homeschooling***

For information on homeschooling, please contact the Homeschooling Office of Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning at 204-945-8138 or visit [http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/schools/ind/home\\_sch.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/schools/ind/home_sch.html).

#### ***Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools***

The Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools is the umbrella organization for funded, non-profit independent schools in the Province of Manitoba. It represents schools who serve those families in Manitoba that support parental choice and excellence in education. For more information, please call 204-783-4481 or visit <http://www.mfis.ca/>.

### Children and Family Advocacy and Support Networks

#### ***Community Living MB***

Community Living Manitoba is dedicated to the full inclusion of persons of all ages who live with an intellectual disability (defined as a life-long condition that interferes with one's ability to learn at the same pace or to the same extent as others). We have a number of local Associations for Community Living in Manitoba (ACLs) and also work with a national federation of ACLs through the Canadian Association for Community Living. We provide services, supports and resources to all Manitobans needing assistance navigating the world of intellectual disabilities. Our resources are developed to be relevant to all families of children and adults with disabilities in our province and include: [A Parent's Guide to Inclusive Education](#), a popular resource for families in Manitoba and around the world; and, **Planning Inclusive Community Schools**, a process that engages school communities in promoting the vision and values of inclusive education. For more information, please call 204-786-1607 or visit <https://www.aclmb.ca/>.

#### ***Office of the Children's Advocate***

The Office of the Children's Advocate can help any young person receiving, or who should be receiving, services that fall under *The Child and Family Services Act* and/or *The Adoption Act*. This includes issues with education plans for children involved with child welfare. They work with young people to protect their rights and to make sure adults hear the opinions and ideas of children and youth. If you are concerned that a child's rights or best interests are not being met, or if you need help with how best to advocate for yourself or a child or youth, the Office of the Children's Advocate may be able to assist. For more information, please call 204-988-7440 or visit <http://www.childrensadvocate.mb.ca/>.

### ***Rainbow Resource Centre***

The Rainbow Resource Centre is a non-profit organization that provides support, education, programming, resources and consultation to individuals, families and professionals on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Rainbow Resource Centre provides services to all sectors throughout Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. Within the education sector, the Rainbow Resource Centre has provided awareness sessions as well as education and training to K-12 administrators, teachers, EAs and support staff. Sessions include the impacts of systemic and internalized homophobia and transphobia and provides tools, strategies and resources to help build reliance and capacity of all youth impacted by discrimination and stigma based on their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

For more information, please call 204-474-0212 or visit <http://www.rainbowresourcecentre.org/>.

### ***Canadian Mental Health Association***

As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA facilitates access to the resources people require to maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness.

For more information, please call 204-982-6100 or visit <http://www.cmha.ca/>.

### ***Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba***

The Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba helps people with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders reach their goals and live better lives. They work with people of all ages – from school children and teens to adults – while also providing educational and networking support for their friends and families.

For more information, please call 204-774-1821 or visit <http://ldamanitoba.org/>.

## **Safety and Bullying**

### ***Cybertips, operated by Canadian Centre for Child Protection***

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection is a charitable organization dedicated to the personal safety of all children. Their goal is to reduce child victimization by providing national programs and services to the Canadian public. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection operates Cybertip.ca, Canada's tip line for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children.

For more information, please call 866-658-9022 or visit <https://www.cybertip.ca/app/en/> or <https://www.protectchildren.ca/app/en/>.

### ***Safe Schools MB***

Safe Schools Manitoba is a unique partnership between the provincial government, the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils and professional associations. It offers workshops and resources for educators, students, parents and community members to build awareness and understanding of the concerns and solutions that impact the safety of children and youth. Parents will find useful resources (such as [Understanding and Responding to Bullying: A Guide for Parents](#)) and workshop topics on its website. Safe Schools Manitoba works closely with MAPC to support parents and communities in accessing resources, addressing concerns or getting help for children affected by bullying. The director of Safe Schools Manitoba is available to parents and can provide valuable

information on how to approach a school about a bullying concern or where to get help for a child who is a victim of bullying.

For more information, please call 204-233-1595 or 204-770-3521 or visit

<http://www.safeschoolsmanitoba.ca/>.

## Dispute Resolution

### ***Student Services/Special Education Dispute Resolution: When Parents and School Divisions Disagree***

Both informal and formal processes are available to parents. School Divisions in Manitoba have information available to parents about local or school division policy. It is important to read the school division policy and to follow the line of communication provided.

For more information, please call 204-945-7907 or visit

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/dr.html>.

### ***Human Rights Commission***

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission is the agency responsible for carrying out the provisions of *The Human Rights Code* (Manitoba), which is the legislation dealing with discrimination in this province. It is an arms-length agency, funded by the Manitoba Government. It has the mandate of administering the Human Rights Code (Manitoba).

The role of the Commission is to promote and educate about human rights in this province and to enforce the anti-discrimination provisions of ***The Code*** through its ***complaint process***. Anyone, including a group or organization, can ***make a complaint*** if they believe that a practice or policy unreasonably discriminates against them. ***The Commission*** investigates those complaints to determine if there is enough evidence to warrant a public hearing of the complaint.

For more information, please call 204-945-3007 or visit

<http://www.manitobahumanrights.ca/contact.html>.

### ***The Ombudsman***

The Ombudsman investigates complaints from the public concerning decisions made by government departments or municipal bodies. The Ombudsman does not have jurisdiction over educational bodies except in complaints relating to access of information and privacy rights under The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) and The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

For more information, please call 204-982-9130 or toll free 1-800-665-0531 or visit

<https://www.ombudsman.mb.ca/>.

## Education Partners

### ***Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA)***

MSBA is a membership organization of elected public school boards. In addition to the services which it provides to school boards and school divisions, the MSBA also responds to parents and citizen inquiries regarding the role and legal obligations of school boards in Manitoba, concern protocols and processes in school divisions, and aspects of provincial education policy and law. The association also provides in kind supports to Safe Schools Manitoba and works with parent and student groups providing leadership and oversight to the Safe Grad and TADD (Teens Against Drunk Driving) programs. For more information please call 204.233.1595 or visit <http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/>.

## Education and Programming Information

### ***Manitoba Education Administration Services***

Education Administration Services is responsible for matters relating to the administration of schools, particularly with respect to legislation, regulation and policies (e.g. school safety, student records, pupil transportation). For further information, contact Education Administration Services at 204-945-6899.

### ***Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc. (MFNERC)***

The Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc. (MFNERC) provides leadership in education, administration, technology, language and culture services to First Nations schools in Manitoba. For more information, please call 204-594-1290 or visit <http://www.mfnerc.org/>.

### ***Aboriginal Education Directorate***

The Aboriginal Education Directorate provides leadership and co-ordination for departmental initiatives in Aboriginal education and training. The Aboriginal Education Directorate operates from within Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. The primary role of the Aboriginal Education Directorate is in research, policy development and strategic initiatives. This is accomplished in the spirit of cooperation and consultation with many groups and individuals, such as school administrators, educators, students, parents, Aboriginal and community organizations and other government departments. The Aboriginal Education Directorate works in partnership with First Nations communities and organization in Manitoba. The Directorate's work is further supported by the guidance of two advisory councils from the Aboriginal community.

The Aboriginal Education Directorate is responsible for administering and supporting The Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents program (BSSAP) and the Community School Program (CSI) to qualifying schools within Manitoba. For more information, please call 204-945-7886 or visit <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aed/>.



***Student Services Administrators Association of Manitoba (SSAAM)***

Student Services Administrators Association of Manitoba provides provincial leadership and informed advocacy to support appropriate educational programming for all students. They can also provide assistance to parents who have questions regarding programming.

For more information, please call 204-681-3415 or visit <http://www.ssaam.mb.ca/>.

**Additional Online Resources**

**WORKING TOGETHER: A GUIDE TO POSITIVE PROBLEM SOLVING FOR SCHOOLS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES**

[http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/problem\\_solving/pdf/complete\\_document.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/problem_solving/pdf/complete_document.pdf)

**WORKING TOGETHER: A PARENT'S GUIDE TO FORMAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

[http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/parents/dr/formal\\_dr.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/parents/dr/formal_dr.pdf)

**APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING IN MANITOBA: STANDARDS FOR STUDENT SERVICES**

[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/index.html)

## Section 4: Appendices

### Meeting Guide

*Note details such as:*

Who is setting the agenda?

What is the goal of this meeting?

What questions do I want to ask?

What strategies work well for my child at home?

Do I need to provide additional information regarding my child's:

- Behaviour
- Activities
- Goals
- Learning needs
- Health
- Emotional needs

Should I take a support person? Would it help me to have someone taking notes?

**The topic of the meeting is:**

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**Note who will be attending the meeting:**

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**My goals are:**

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**The information I need to participate effectively:**

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### What does my child want shared?

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\* It is important to include your child whenever possible, but...you need to determine whether it is appropriate for your child to attend.

**Have confidence in yourself! You know your child and have important things to share!**

### If you feel unsure or confused:

Review the purpose of the meeting and focus on what will work for your child. Openly share information that will lead to better decisions, and remember - If you do not understand something -- 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 understanding.

### Plan your next steps. Discuss:

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

# A Self Help Guide to Addressing Concerns

*Note details such as:*

**Concern:**

What happened and when?

What difficulties has this caused for my child?

What policies/laws might apply to my situation?

What are my rights and responsibilities?

Make sure your concerns are based on what you know to be true from your experience or your child's experience.

**Note the events/incidents that have led to this concern:**

## Possible Information Sources:

- School or school division policies and/or procedures
- Your local Parent Advisory Council
- Manitoba Association of Parent Councils
- Local service agencies
- Community and school based counseling services

**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.

<i><b>Note details such as:</b></i>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Outcome:</b>
Who you talked to and when.			
How? Letter, phone, email, etc.?			
What they said they would do for your child.			
When and how will they let you know what action has been taken.			
What you said you would do.			
Do you need to follow up?			

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

**List some of your ideas for addressing the concerns(s):**

1.	
2.	
3.	

## **RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, DUTIES, AND POWERS AS OUTLINED IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACT AND THE EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION ACT**

**Please note** that this information is general and not specific to informal dispute resolution.

### **Rights of Students**

- To attend a designated public school in their home division/district
- To receive regular testing and evaluation of academic performance and achievement
- To receive at least once a year and free of charge a transcript or record of academic achievement
- Subject to certain conditions, have access to his or her student file if the student has attained the age of majority
- To be accompanied by a parent or other adult to assist and make representations to the school board before a decision is made to expel

### **Rights of Parents**

- To enroll his or her child in public school
- To be informed regularly of the student's attendance, behaviour, and academic achievement
- To have access to their child's student file, subject to conditions
- To receive information about programs that are available
- To be informed of discipline and behaviour management policies of school/division, and be consulted before the policies are established or revised
- To form an ACSL (Advisory Council for School Leadership) where a petition has been signed by 10 or more parents
- To be a member of an ACSL, local school committee, or school committee
- To accompany the child and assist him or her to make representations to the school board before a decision is made to expel the child

### **Responsibilities of Students**

- To attend school and classes regularly and punctually
- To comply with discipline and behaviour management policies
- To complete assignments and other related work required by teachers or other employees of the school division
- To treat with respect school property and property of others employed at or attending the school
- If property of a school/division is destroyed, damaged, lost, or converted by the intentional or negligent act, the child and his or her parents are jointly and severally liable to the school board for the loss

## Responsibilities of Parents

- To co-operate fully with teachers and other school/division employees to ensure child complies with school/division discipline and behaviour management policies
- To take all reasonable measures to ensure the child attends school regularly
- To assume responsibility jointly and severally with the child where school/division property is damaged by the intention or negligent act of that child

## Duties of Teachers

1. To teach diligently and faithfully according to terms of agreement with school division and according to *The Public Schools Act* and regulations
2. To keep a record of attendance
3. To provide to the Minister or field representative any required information
4. To notify the principal of any pupil attending school who he or she believes has been exposed to or is suffering from a communicable disease
5. To seize or cause to be seized and take possession of any offensive/dangerous weapon brought to school by a student and hand over same to the principal
6. To provide progress reports as determined by the school board
7. To admit to the classroom student teachers enrolled in a teacher education institution approved by the Minister, for the purpose of practice teaching and of observing instruction
8. To suspend a student for up to two days when that student engages in conduct the teacher considers detrimental to the classroom learning environment, or which contravenes a school code of conduct

## Duties of Principals

- To supervise buildings and grounds during school hours, including safety, repairs, cleanliness, et cetera
- To admit (or not admit) visitors to school premises
- To remove persons from school premises who are causing a disturbance or interruption, trespassing, or who are present for a purpose not reasonably associated with the normal functioning of the school
- To provide each student, free of charge, a transcript of his or her record of achievement at least at the end of each school year
- To supervise and discipline each student in the school from the time of the student's arrival at the school until the student's departure for the day, including the noon hour for those students who are eligible to remain at school, and including school field trips
- To provide disciplinary authority over students from the period they enter in, ride on, and alight from a school bus
- To suspend students for up to six weeks for engaging in conduct that the principal considers injurious to the school's welfare or educational purpose, except where, by resolution, the school board has prohibited the principal from suspending a pupil for more than one week without the superintendent's approval

- To prepare the plan for loading and unloading of school buses; to designate loading and unloading zones; to supervise or assign a responsible person to supervise loading and unloading
- To oversee the testing and promotion of students
- To implement optional supplementary curricular and extracurricular activities, subject to approval of the school board and Minister

### **Duties and Powers of Superintendents**

Upon delegation by the school board, a superintendent may:

- Employ, within the establishment and budgetary limits set by the school board, necessary staff, except senior officers and employees holding administrative or supervisory positions
- Appoint attendance officers
- Administer the day-to-day affairs of the division
- Supervise teachers, vice-principals, and principals
- Suspend a student from school for up to six weeks for engaging in conduct that the superintendent considers injurious to the school's welfare

### **Duties and Powers of School Boards**

- To provide or make provision for education in Grades 1 to S4 inclusive for all resident persons who have the right to attend school
- To provide adequate school accommodation for the resident persons who have the right to attend school
- To regulate the use of public school buildings and property
- To keep school buildings, contents, and premises in proper repair
- To employ teachers and other personnel as may be required, prescribe their duties, and arrange for the payment of their salaries
- To determine the number, kind, grade, and description of schools to be established and maintained
- To determine the times when and the manner in which reports and other information respecting pupils shall be delivered or provided or made available by teachers
- To report to the Minister any teacher employed in a school within their jurisdiction who has been charged with or convicted of an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada relating to the physical or sexual abuse of children
- To provide to school advisory councils, local school committees, and school committees any information that is reasonably necessary for their operation
- To provide to the Minister, at the times and in the form and manner determined, such information as is required
- To establish written procedures respecting the collection, storage, retrieval, and use of information respecting pupils
- To provide or make provision for the transportation of all resident pupils to and from school who would have more than 1.6 kilometres to walk in order to reach school, or for any pupils, regardless of distance, who are unable to walk to school because of physical or other handicaps
- To report any offenses committed by a staff person or convictions of a staff person concerning the physical or sexual abuse of children, or where there are implications for the safety, health, and well-being of students



In addition, a school board has the right

- To enter into an agreement with the Minister to establish and conduct special courses that are not part of the public schools program
- To provide, with or without charges, lunches to pupils
- To provide materials, appliances, and equipment for school sports and games and supervise and direct sports and games during school terms or vacation
- To purchase books and other instructional materials to be given to the pupils or to be loaned to them with or without charge
- To provide technical and vocational instruction as may be approved by the Minister for pupils enrolled in or attending the schools
- To establish and administer, with the consent of the Minister, a system of medical and dental inspection of pupils and employees, including arrangements for attending to the health, cleanliness, and physical condition of the pupils and employees
- To establish, operate, maintain, and regulate a system of patrols for the protection of children from traffic accidents
- To suspend or expel any pupil who, upon investigation by the school board, is found to be guilty of conduct injurious to the welfare of the school
- To grant a leave of absence to any employee, and grant the employee a monthly allowance as the school board deems advisable

### **Powers of Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth**

- To order a public school to be closed in an emergency or where it is deemed in the best interest of the community, and cancel the order where the emergency no longer exists
- To release information relating to pupil achievement and the effectiveness of programs in public or private schools
- To enact regulations as are deemed necessary with respect to:
  - duties and qualifications of teachers and principals
  - classification, organization, discipline, and governance of public schools
  - establishment of school advisory councils, including their formation, composition, and mandate prescription of the minimum standard of academic and professional education acceptable for the certification of teachers
  - suspension of pupils including authorization to suspend, the circumstances under which pupils may be suspended, the periods of suspension that may be imposed, and any other matter related to suspensions
  - prescription of the records to be maintained by a school board
  - prescription of the standard to be attained by pupils on entering or leaving any grade or level in any school
  - prescription of methods and procedures for the assessment and evaluation of any aspect of pupil achievement and for the assessment of courses of study and programs
  - information that school boards are required to provide to the Minister, including the times and form and manner in which it is to be provided information concerning pupil

- achievement that school boards are required to release to the public, and procedures governing the release of the information
- generally all matters having to do with education

RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, DUTIES, AND POWERS AS *OUTLINED IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACT AND THE EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION ACT* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004, p. 27-31.)

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## Feedback for MAPC's Empowering Parents: A Guide to Addressing Concerns in Manitoba Schools

MAPC's intent is to review and update this guide on an annual basis to ensure it continues addressing the needs of our membership. Your feedback is vitally important to us – please share your comments with us at any time. Please complete this form and fax to 204-956-7780 or scan and email to [info@mapc.mb.ca](mailto:info@mapc.mb.ca).

### 1. What section(s) did you find most useful? Please list in order of importance.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 2. What section(s) did you find least useful?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Was the language clear and easy to understand? Circle One.      Yes              No

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Was the layout easy to use and understand? Circle One.              Yes              No

### 5. What additional information might be missing or difficult to find?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments - please attach an additional sheet, if required.

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