

Parent Concern Protocol



Education depends on a strong relationship between the student, the school and the parents/guardians. It is well-known that students whose parents are actively involved in their child's education have better attitude towards school and have fewer absences.

Developing a strong relationship takes work.

- Parents are encouraged to communicate regularly with their child's teacher from the beginning of the school year and to establish a communication system that works for both parties. This could be face to face meetings, phone calls, brief emails. Some students or parents need more frequent communication.
- Sometimes issues/problems will come up that need to be addressed. Figuring out how to resolve concerns be daunting for some or smooth and comfortable for others. What is the process for addressing concerns? **Best practice is to seek to understand by meeting with the person and maintaining a positive mindset. Assume everyone is doing the best they can and everyone is acting with good intentions. Then work to find a solution together.**
 - If you have worked to develop a strong positive relationship, dealing with issues will be easier.
 - Don't brush the issue aside and hope it won't happen again. This may result in the problem festering, reoccurrence and even souring of the relationship between home and school.
 - Call or make an appointment to **speak with the person most closely connected** with the concern. Eg:
 - Academic needs: teacher or SERT
 - Behavioural concerns for own child: teacher or SERT
 - Bullying: teacher or Principal/Vice-Principal
 - Work to resolve the issue by **asking questions** that will help you gain more information.

For example: " My son came home from school yesterday very upset. He says that student x has been bullying him. Have you seen anything going on? Can you help me address this problem? Do you think we need support from the Principal?"

Rather than: "My sons says you're doing nothing to stop student X from bullying him everyday. I want it stopped!"

- **Listen carefully** and jot down notes, if needed.
- It's okay to let the person know you are upset in a respectful way.
- **Seek to find common ground.** In schools, everyone is there to keep students at the heart of everything we do. Always thinking together about what would be **best for the student** will help you come together.
- At the end of the conversation, **recap the next steps.**
- Sometimes, you may need to articulate the concerns and questions and then give the person some time to gather information. Honour this need and set a time to meet again soon.
- Agree to **stay in touch** with the person so that you can be sure to have addressed the issue. Perhaps make a follow up appointment or just call in to reconnect and get an update.
- **Shouting, using offensive or intimidating language will not resolve the issue and will likely result in the other person limiting further communication with you: the opposite of what you need.**
- What should you do if you feel you have not been able to resolve an issue with the person?
 - **Call the Principal.** The Principal can often mediate and support further dialogue. Use all the strategies above.
- If issues are still not resolved, each school has a Superintendent and a Trustee.
 - Superintendent: Camille Logan: 905-895-5155
 - Trustee: Martin Van Beek (Newmarket) martin.vanbeek@yrdsb.ca (905) 830-6776
 - The Trustee will listen and explain policy and procedure and provide guidance.