

If Conflict Arises:

**Reaching Resolutions
when conflict occurs**

**A safe, pleasant, and productive
learning and working environment for all**



Revised 07-2010

Introduction

Millions of interactions occur each year in our school system. Parents/guardians, teachers, students and others communicate with each other, cooperatively make decisions, and generally strive to improve the service to students. The information outlined in this brochure is intended to help foster a strong, positive working relationship between parents/guardians and teachers.

What are my rights and responsibilities as a parent/guardian? *Source: NB Education Act*

(131) In support of the learning success of his or her child and the learning environment at the school, a parent is expected to

- encourage his or her child to attend to assigned homework,
- communicate reasonably with school personnel employed at the school his or her child attends as required in the best interest of the child,
- cause his or her child to attend school as required by this Act,
- ensure the basic needs of his or her child are met, and
- have due care for the conduct of his or her child at school and while on the way to and from school.

(132) The parent of a pupil has a right to reasonable consultation with the pupils' teacher or the principal of the school the pupil attends with respect to the education of the pupil.

(133) It is the responsibility of the parent of a pupil and of school personnel to conduct themselves in a respectful manner and to follow established procedures when involved in communications concerning the pupil.

How Can Parents/Guardians Assist in Fostering a Positive Learning and Working Environment?

- Show support for the school by volunteering or attending school functions, participation in Home and School, Parent School Support Committee (PSSC) or the District Education Council (DEC).
- Show interest and concern in your child's efforts and achievements.
- Encourage and Expect positive learning experiences by providing a quiet area to study, and a consistent opportunity or schedule for school responsibilities.
- Refrain from making negative comments (either verbally or electronically) about schools and teachers in the presence of students, or for that matter, in the presence of other adults.

If Disagreement Occurs

It is possible in any system, like education, involving hundreds of thousands of interactions daily, that some of these contacts will lead to misunderstandings or disagreements. When a misunderstanding or disagreement occurs between the school system and a parent/guardian, it is essential for the well-being of all concerned, especially the student involved, that the adults reach a resolution as quickly and reasonably as possible. Since it is possible for either party to feel offended in these disputes, both must feel comfortable that they have a process to bring the dispute to resolution. The end result must always be a supportive and positive learning environment for all in the classroom.

What is the Process to Follow to Resolve a Question, Concern or Complaint?

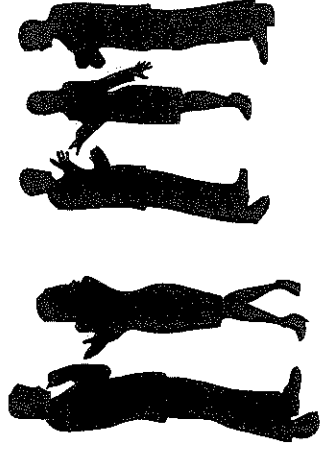
Source: Policy 703: Positive Learning and Working Environment

If a conflict arises between parents/guardians and school personnel the following process should be used to resolve the issue:

- Talk or meet with the person directly involved. If either party is uncomfortable with this approach, request involvement from school administration and/or appropriate district office personnel.
- Discuss the issue using plain language. The goal of the discussion is to **problem-solve** together to find resolution.
- If there is no satisfactory resolution resulting from the discussion, the next step is to meet with school administration (if not already involved).
- If resolution is not achieved at the school level, the next step is to meet with district office personnel (if not already involved) with the **last resort** for resolving conflict being a meeting with the Superintendent.

Other Considerations

- In some situations, the teacher and/or school administrator involved may wish to **communicate with the NBTA/NBTF** to seek advice and guidance in the matter.
- The strength of the school system and its impact on students is greatest when influences at home and at school work in harmony to achieve the results for students.
- In rare occasions, the conflict may require other interventions such as initiating procedures under the New Brunswick Trespass Act, calling police for their assistance, or launching a civil suit.



How Should Parents/Guardians Arrange a School Meeting?

School personnel welcome planned visits from parents/guardians. The following guidelines should be followed when parents/guardians wish to arrange a school meeting:

- As in any professional workplace, it is expected that parents/guardians will arrange an appointment in advance of a meeting.
- Parents/guardians wishing to visit a classroom must contact the principal and teacher involved for further information about arranging the visit.

Department of Education's Policy 703: Positive Learning and Working Environment

School personnel and students have the **right to work and learn** in an environment that is safe, productive and harassment free. As **partners in education**, we all share an interest in teaching and modelling positive behaviour.

- *Every person is valued and treated with respect.*
- *Students have a sense of belonging and connection, feel they are supported by school personnel, and have a positive relationship with at least one adult in the school system.*
- *Parents, school personnel, district staff and the school community understand that social skills, self-discipline, empathy, compassion and ethics are learned throughout life.*

For more information on this policy, please visit the Department of Education's website: <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/policies.asp> (scroll down to Policy 703 and its appendices).

Conclusion

The purpose of the school system is to provide students with a learning environment in which each can succeed without unnecessary disruption. Parents/guardians and teachers must work together to create this learning environment for students.

Your child, our student

will gain maximum benefit if we can find ways to ensure the relationship between home and school is positive. It is important, therefore, that both the influences at home and the communication at school encourage a **positive attitude** in the student toward school, fellow students, and school personnel.