Parent / Caregiver Guide to Appealing a Decision

Bylaw 4 — School Act Appeals (Section 11)

What is an Appeal?

An appeal is a formal way for parents / caregivers or students to ask the Board of Education to review a decision made by a school district employee when it **significantly affects a student's education, health or safety.**

You may appeal decisions such as:

- Suspensions or expulsions
- Changes to education programs
- Not following an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or failing to support a student with diverse abilities
- Safety issues not addressed (bullying, threats, etc.)
- Being denied access to an education program
- Any decision (or lack of decision) that seriously impacts your child

Step 1: Try to Resolve the Issue First

Before filing an appeal, parents must follow the district's **Addressing Concerns** process:

1. Speak with the staff member involved
2. If unresolved, speak with the school principal
3. If still unresolved, speak with the Office of the Superintendent
4. Only after this process can you submit a formal appeal

Step 2: Start the Appeal (Within 30 Days)

If the concern is not resolved, you can file a **Notice of Appeal** to the Secretary Treasurer **within 30 days** of the decision or of finishing the resolution steps.

Your Notice of Appeal must include:

- Your name and contact information
- Your child's name, school, grade
- The decision you are appealing and how it affects your child
- Who made the decisions
- When you were told about the decision
- Steps you already tried to resolve it
- What outcome you are asking for
- Whether you want an oral hearing
- Whether you need support (translator, accommodations)

Support available:

- Help completing forms
- A staff "navigator" not involved in the issue
- Interpreters or other accommodations
- For Indigenous families: Indigenous advocacy organizations

Step 3: After You Submit the Appeal

The Secretary Treasurer will:

- Send copies of your appeal to the Board, Superintendent, and staff involved
- Confirm receipt of the appeal
- Review your appeal to ensure it meets the requirements

The Board decides within **21 days** whether your appeal will proceed.

Step 4: How the Appeal is Heard

The Board may:

- Review written submissions
- Hold an oral hearing
- Or both

Hearings are private.

At the hearing, you may bring:

- An advocate
- A support person
- A translator

Step 5: The Board's Decision

The Board considers:

- Whether the decision affected your child's education, health, or safety
- Whether the decision followed laws and policies
- Whether it was fair and reasonable

The board must make its final decision within **45 days.**
You will receive the decision and written reasons.

If You Still Disagree

You may appeal to the **Student Appeals Branch** of the **Ministry of Education:**
Email: EDUC.studentappeals@gov.bc.ca
Phone: 1 877 387 8037
Website: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/student-disputes-and-appeals

If you believe the process was unfair, you may contact the **BC Ombudsperson**:
Phone: 1 800 567 3247
Website: www.bcombudsperson.ca