

# Vancouver Public Schools Office of The Education Ombuds

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



### Who We Serve

The ombuds works with students, families, schools, and the community to address concerns, resolve conflicts and answer questions related to a student's educational experience.

- Receives inquiries from parents and students
- Inquiries can be made by phone, email or in person
- A family can be referred to the office by a district administrators with parent consent



### Services Provided

The ombuds will provide confidential and unbiased guidance, resources, information, and support to build greater family-school partnerships. The ombuds has two business days to respond to any inquiry.

- Listens to concerns and questions
- Provides information around district policy and procedure
- Guides families through addressing concerns
- Facilitates communication
- Provides informal mediation



### Services Not Provided

There are many ways the the ombuds office can work to resolve conflicts and build supportive school partnerships. There are however services and supports that the ombuds office does not provide.

- Does not act as an advocate
- Does not offer legal advice
- Does not act as a compliance officer
- Can not overturn or change any decision or action
- Can not intervene in any legal or appeal process

# Other Relevant Facts

- The assistance provided to families is confidential, unbiased, independent, and informal.
- The ombuds office manages up to 20 open cases at a time so that the needs of families can be adequately addressed. If an inquiry or referral is made while the ombuds caseload is full, the family will be invited to complete the intake process and then the case will be placed on “pending” status until an opening is available.
- A case can be closed once a parent has given verbal or written notification that they have received the information or resources they need and/or a resolution has been reached in the matter.
- A case can be closed if a parent has not been in contact with the ombuds office for 30 days.
- Cases will be closed at the end of the school year. If the issue has not been resolved, the ombuds will work with the family to identify next steps.
- Written notification will be sent to the parent via email when their case has been closed with instructions on how to reopen the case, or make a new inquiry if another matter occurs.
- If the ombuds office is unable to successfully assist a family and school personnel in resolving the matter within 3 months, the ombuds with parent permission, will submit the matter to the appropriate school level executive director.