

## PAMPHLETS IN THIS SERIES

<b>TG28M</b>	Administration of Medication/Medical Services: Rights and Risks
<b>TG28K</b>	Beyond the Norm: Dealing with Parental Harassment
<b>TG28B</b>	Employee Assistance Programs
<b>TG28C</b>	Leaves of Absence
<b>TG28A</b>	Maintaining Standards: Professional Discipline
<b>TG28O</b>	Part-Time Teaching — Frequently Asked Questions
<b>TG28N</b>	Sick Leave
<b>TG28P</b>	Substitute Teachers
<b>TG28Q</b>	Teachers and Educational Assistants: Roles and Responsibilities
<b>TG28F</b>	Teachers' Conventions: Obligations
<b>TG28L</b>	Teachers with Children in School
<b>TG28G</b>	Tenure, Termination and Transfer
<b>TG28H</b>	What to Do in a Crisis
<b>TG28I</b>	Why Is There an ATA?

### **Barnett House**

11010 142 Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5N 2R1  
Local calls 780-447-9400  
Toll free in Alberta 1-800-232-7208  
Fax 780-455-6481

### **Southern Alberta Regional Office (SARO)**

100, 3016 5 Avenue NE  
Calgary, Alberta T2A 6K4  
Local calls 403-265-2672  
Toll free in Alberta 1-800-332-1280  
Fax 403-266-6190

Website [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca)

ISSN 1198-1547  
ISBN 1-894552-47-4  
MS-24 TG28L 2019 02

# TEACHER GUIDE

## Teachers with Children in School



The Alberta  
Teachers' Association

# Teachers with Children in School

## Parental Rights

Teachers may also be parents with children in the school system. Like other parents, they will occasionally want to raise concerns and participate in special activities involving their own children. At such times, they will need to balance their rights as parents with their responsibilities as professionals and as employees.

## Raising Concerns

As professionals, teachers must act with additional care because any concerns that they raise will generally carry more impact than those raised by parents who are not teachers. Although teachers who are also parents have the same rights as other parents, they must maintain a professional standard at all times. Teachers have been disciplined for failing to do so.

Like other parents, teachers who have a concern about their own child's teacher should discuss the matter directly with the teacher in an effort to clarify or correct the situation. A parent who goes behind the teacher's back to an administrator should be referred back to the teacher. If no resolution can be reached directly, a supervisor may be brought in to assist.

For teachers, the acceptable route for complaining about another teacher is spelled out in sections 13 and 14 of the Code of Professional Conduct. According to the code, a teacher who has a complaint about a colleague should follow this procedure:

1. Begin by raising the concern with the colleague.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved, tell the colleague it will be raised confidentially with "proper officials." Proper officials in this context are people in positions of authority who are able to act with respect to the complaints or criticisms. Other teachers, parents, members of the community and school trustees are not proper officials.
3. Consider putting the criticisms into a written report so that they can be verified. If a report is created, the teacher must give a copy of the report to the colleague being criticized before sending it to proper officials. In case resolution is still possible, the colleague should also be given a chance to respond to the criticisms. E-mail is not the

best way to report criticisms about a colleague as it requires extra attention to maintain confidentiality.

Teachers who are parents must also be mindful of section 12 of the Code of Professional Conduct, which states that teachers must not undermine the confidence of pupils in their teachers.

Teachers often have concerns about the balance between their professional obligations and their parental rights. The Alberta Court of Appeal has ruled that, in a meeting with proper officials called for the purpose of discussing the progress of their child, parents who are also teachers can freely discuss their child's educational background without fear of professional repercussions. In all other situations the code must be followed without fail.

A teacher who raises a concern as a parent may request only actions that are within the purview of a parent. For example, it is appropriate for such a teacher to ask for a general outline of plans and a synopsis of course content. It is inappropriate for such a teacher to seek copies of day, unit or year plans, to inquire about the professional growth plans of the child's teacher or to ask to peruse the teacher's mark book. Like other parents, teachers who are also parents are not entitled to evaluate or supervise their child's teacher.

## Special Events

Teachers maintain their professional role even when acting outside the school setting. Any time teachers mix their personal and professional roles they are at risk. Teachers should act with more caution than other parents because any casual comments they make or actions they take can be misinterpreted.

Even elementary teachers are at higher risk of legal, financial, professional and employment liability than other parents. As a result, they should take no part in planning, fundraising for, supervising, participating in or operating such activities as "safe grads" in their own or any other school. Similarly, teachers who bring their own children on field trips or to special activities also increase their risk. Such actions are not recommended.

For additional information about the involvement of teachers in school-related activities, contact an Association executive staff member.