



Public Interest Disclosure Act & the K-12 Sector

The [Public Interest Disclosure Act](#) came into effect December 2019, and is being phased in to cover provincial public sectors over a five-year period. On December 1, 2023, PIDA began covering the K-12 sector.

PIDA provides a legally protected avenue for employees and former employees to report serious or systemic wrongdoing to their supervisor, a designated officer, or the BC Ombudsperson.

The BC Ombudsperson, an independent officer of the BC Legislature, is mandated under PIDA to investigate allegations of wrongdoing from public sector employees, and complaints from employees who believe they have been subject to reprisals for reporting wrongdoing, seeking advice about reporting, or participating in an investigation

PIDA requires that all school districts have at least one designated officer to receive and investigate disclosures.

Employees can seek advice or report wrongdoing to their supervisor, the designated officer, or directly to the Office of the BC Ombudsperson. Employees can report reprisals only to the Ombudsperson.

Members can also seek advice from their union. It is important to note that a union's role under PIDA is to provide general information about what is involved in making a complaint, but not to assess whether allegations would meet the threshold of wrongdoing.

School districts should be informing locals and members about their procedures for assessing and investigating disclosures. If your school district has not already done so, you may wish to raise it with them.

[Reporting wrongdoing to the BC Ombudsperson](#)

If you make a report of wrongdoing to the BC Ombudsperson, an investigator will contact you within 2 business days to clarify the details of your report. You can submit a report of wrongdoing in writing by completing this [form](#).

Once you have submitted your report, you can expect the following:

Review & Assessment

The Office of the BC Ombudsperson will review the information provided to determine if there is a reasonable basis to launch an investigation. This includes assessing whether, if proven, the allegations meet the threshold of wrongdoing under the law. Not all allegations will qualify as potential wrongdoing.

Your identity will be kept confidential during this process. You will be informed of our decision to investigate your report.

Investigation

BC Ombudsperson investigations are conducted in a timely and fair manner. This includes providing any person who is the subject of an investigation with notice of the allegation and the opportunity to respond. If your report is investigated, additional contact with you will depend on the individual circumstances of the investigation. All investigations are completed as quickly as possible.

Report & Recommendations

Following an investigation, the BC Ombudsperson will issue a report containing any findings and recommendations to the public body involved. The discloser, or person who report the wrongdoing, will also receive a summary of conclusions and findings.

If in the public interest, the BC Ombudsperson may report publicly on the outcome.