

## Appendix I: Student-Parent/Guardian Agreement (Plain Talk 23)

There are many reasons—even many good reasons—why young people may feel powerless. One area where they can have some control is in their commitment to education. It is, of course, unreasonable that the burden for sustaining an educational path—maintaining focus and motivation—should fall only on the student’s shoulders. When parents and guardians, teachers, and community stakeholders are also invested in a student’s educational success, more good things happen.

The agreement in National Plain Talk 23 describes high expectations between parents/guardians and students and affirms faith in each other. Negotiating this kind of agreement helps empower both young people and the significant adults in their lives, helps to initiate and facilitate dialogue, and helps to define and discuss issues that can lead to conflict and tension or cooperation and support. Use this as a model that can be readily modified to meet individual needs. It is obviously focused on students and parents/guardians, but it can be easily adapted for any combination of stakeholders. It is appropriate for teachers, administrators, parents, support staff, clinical staff, community liaison workers, and youth support workers. It could also be incorporated into the school handbook.

Schools need to be involved in partnership and relationship building with the community. This agreement is a commitment piece to the tool kit. You can use it

- as a basis for the acquisition of skills related to assertiveness, conflict resolution, and communication
- to discuss topics like engagement with learning, seeking feedback from parents, and ownership of one’s learning
- to start an educational relationship on a solid footing
- as a follow-up to a parent/guardian–student interview
- whenever there are tensions and conflicts within a family
- when mentorship programs are initiated
- as a professional development resource for teachers, counsellors, and social workers