

LIBERTAS LAW

Lisa D.S. Bildy, JD, BA
519.852.6967 (direct)
bildy@libertaslaw.ca

January 13, 2026

Ms. Kate Kerr, Superintendent
Sunshine Coast School District 46
PO Box 220
Gibsons, BC V0N 1V0

Sent via email to: superintendent@sd46.bc.ca

Dear Ms. Kerr,

Re: Section 177 Appeal by Lara Yates

My firm has been retained by a parent in your district, Lara Yates, to appeal a direction under section 177 of the *School Act* (the “**Direction**”). In her letter dated December 5, 2025, the principal of Chatelech Secondary School, Rae-dene Pednaud, informed Ms. Yates that she was banned from attending at her children’s school until at least January 31, 2026. This was allegedly due to her vocal opposition to the land acknowledgment performed by school staff at the start of an evening drama class presentation on December 4 (the “**Event**”).

Background to the Event

Ms. Yates has advised me that she has made numerous attempts to engage with staff on this issue privately over the past decade, expressing her concern that children are being subjected to a political ideology that does not belong in a neutral public school system—a system meant to serve students from a variety of backgrounds and political views. When one of her children was required to draft her own land acknowledgment in an English class, Ms. Yates objected and the child consequently failed the course. While land acknowledgments have arguably become a form of ritual or even penance for many people who hold a “progressive” worldview, this is not shared universally. Furthermore, as the parent of four children who are, or have been, enrolled in the Indigenous Learning program, Ms. Yates is of the view that such statements cause more harm than good in terms of reconciliation. Given recent court rulings, land acknowledgments are the subject of growing concern and controversy for many residents of BC, thereby serving to further divide the populace.

The Event

Having been unsuccessful in stopping this practice through private channels, Ms. Yates opted to express herself publicly, calling out, “save us your race-baiting” and similar remarks during the land acknowledgment ritual before the Event. In Ms. Yates’ view, if she must be forced to listen to school staff express a political statement, particularly one that causes her feelings of moral injury, then she can express her opposition to them, too. Following her brief expression, she remained in her seat and sat quietly for the duration of the performance. Although the Principal’s letter states that “staff

were required to intervene”, that was not the case. A staff member came over during the students’ performance, when she was already quiet, and asked her to be quiet. She told him to shush so she could hear the play, and he returned to his seat.

Targeting of the Student and Family

Unfortunately, the drama teacher, Ms. K. Heidig, announced to her students backstage immediately following the Event that it was “█████ parents” who had disrupted the ritual. █████ was then targeted for bullying and mocking by her classmates and became fearful and upset. A counsellor was called in that evening by the principal to assess whether █████ should be taken into care based on her mental health and suicidality. There was no such finding by the counsellor (the suggestion was preposterous under the circumstances) and █████ ultimately returned home to her family that night. The principal then took it upon herself to report the family to the Ministry of Children and Family Development, which sent staff to interview the two children still living at home, after which they immediately closed their file, finding nothing concerning. Targeting this family with social services interventions because they do not share the current progressive orthodoxy over land acknowledgments is reprehensible. Ms. Yates and her family have rightly interpreted this action as threatening and intimidating, meant to wield the power of the state in order to silence their political and ideological dissent.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms

School officials and staff have **no jurisdiction over the political views of parents** of children in the system and have no right to ostracize a student for their parents’ opinions and beliefs. And, as a publicly funded institution, schools and school districts and their policies are not above criticism from those parents. The blatant politicization of public education is a legitimate basis of criticism. Ms. Yates has rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to hold and express her opinions and beliefs about public education. As a public board, SD46 and its staff are subject to the *Charter* and cannot unreasonably limit those rights.

Abuse of Process with Section 177 Direction

Section 177 of the *School Act* provides that, “A person must not disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school or an official school function.” It is acknowledged that Ms. Yates’ expression may have briefly disrupted the Event; however, she was not directed to leave at that time. Instead, the following day she was issued the Direction not to attend on the premises until January 31, 2026, or later, if certain conditions are not met.

This punitive Direction goes beyond the scope and intent of the section, which permits a school official to make an *immediate* direction that the disruptive person *leave the premises* and to direct that they are not permitted to enter on the premises again without prior approval of a school official. It is a section designed to deal in the moment with someone who is causing a disturbance that impacts the safety of those around. It is not meant to be used as a form of discipline after the fact. And, as noted, **the school does not have the authority to discipline a parent**. Since there is no contemporaneous connection between Ms. Yates’ brief disruption and the Direction, it is legally

untenable to argue that the two are meaningfully connected. Rather, Ms. Yates' right to express herself, validly and briefly, is being infringed.

The [Provincial Guidelines](#) make it clear that "this section is intended to be used only in exceptional circumstances, where there is a risk to student/staff safety or significant and ongoing disruption to the educational programs offered by the school." There is no reasonable basis for this section to have been applied to Ms. Yates for a brief outburst, and doing so was an abuse of process. The only person whose safety was adversely impacted was that of her daughter, who was kept from immediately returning home to her family while spurious allegations were made about her mental health and suicidality.

The principal's letter issuing the section 177 *School Act* order indicates that "any recurrence of this behaviour, on or off school grounds, may result in an extension and/or expansion of your exclusion." This is a further overreach into parental discipline that has no foundation in the legislation; Ms. Yates is free to express her opposition to the school's land acknowledgement ritual as she sees fit.

Impact on the Student and Sibling

It is one thing to exclude non-parents from the premises but ordering that a student's parent be barred from school property must be exceptional and rare, as per the Provincial Guidelines. A parent must be able to access the premises to pick up their child, speak to a teacher, attend events and ensure that their child is safe, particularly when the child has been subject to bullying and false reports to social services by school staff. Ms. Yates has had to keep both of her daughters home from school since December 5 under these circumstances. Accordingly, this justifies an appeal of the decision pursuant to the *School Act* as it "significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student." Ms. Yates is entitled to appeal a s. 177 order in any event, pursuant to the Provincial Guidelines.

Relief Requested

We are writing this letter to you in some detail with a view to informally resolving the matter by your intercession in: (1) the immediate lifting of the s. 177 suspension; and (2) the direction of a satisfactory apology to both the child and parent from the drama teacher and principal at Chatelech Secondary School. If that cannot be achieved, a more formal Notice of Appeal is attached hereto. We request a hearing at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

LIBERTAS LAW



Lisa D.S. Bily
Barrister & Solicitor

Encs.: Letters dated Dec. 5 and 18, 2025, from Principal Pednaud to Lara Yates; Formal Notice of Appeal

Formal Notice of Appeal

Student Name: [REDACTED] Yates **Grade:** 12
Parent/Guardian: Lara Yates
Address: [REDACTED].
City/Town: Sechelt **Postal Code:** [REDACTED]
Phone No.: [REDACTED]
Principal: Rae-dene Pednaud **Employee(s) Involved:** Ms. K. Heilig, Drama Teacher
Ms. R. Pednaud, Principal
School: Chatelech Secondary School
Preferred Contact for this Appeal: Lisa D.S. Bildy, Barrister & Solicitor: bildy@libertaslaw.ca
Date of Decision BeingAppealed: December 5, 2025

Provide a brief statement outlining the complaint or decision that was made or not made which significantly affects the education, health or safety of the student.

Please see attached letter. Parent was excluded under s. 177 from school property for an extended period, which affects the education and/or safety of the student and her sibling, and is subject to appeal regardless. The parent cannot safely leave her children at the school when she is banned from the property (particularly in light of the discriminatory treatment of the student by the above-named employees) and has kept them home since the s. 177 Direction was issued by the principal. The school has said it cannot accommodate work-at-home packages for the second semester, which may impact the student's graduation.

Grounds for the appeal:

A s. 177 Direction was not necessary to restore order at the drama performance, and the parent was not ordered to leave the premises immediately following her brief expression of opposition to the land acknowledgment. Instead, she sat quietly for the entire performance. The exclusion direction was improperly issued after the fact to impose a form of discipline on the parent for her expressed political views. The school and/or district have no authority to discipline a parent. This is an abuse of process and an unjustified infringement of section 2(b) of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Requested action or relief:

Immediate reversal of the s. 177 Direction and a formal apology from both the drama teacher and the principal for their behaviour toward the student and her family following the event.



December 5, 2025

Lara Yates,

This letter serves as formal written notice, issued under Section 177 of the British Columbia School Act, that you are excluded from the land and premises of Chatelech Secondary School effective immediately. You are not permitted to attend on the school site for any purpose unless you receive prior written authorization from me, as Principal, or from another administrator authorized by the Board of Education. Section 177(1) of the School Act states:

"A person must not disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school or an official school function."

On Thursday, December 4, 2025, during the theatre performance at Chatelech Secondary School, you directed offensive and hateful language toward a staff member at the beginning of the event including words such as 'bigot' and 'racist'. This behaviour caused a significant disruption and constituted harassment and verbal aggression. It was witnessed by students, staff, families, and community members, many of whom experienced distress, discomfort, or a diminished sense of safety as a result of the incident. Staff were required to intervene.

The District has an obligation to provide its employees and students with a working and learning environment free of harassing and aggressive behaviour. Your conduct on December 4, 2025 was inconsistent with this obligation, and will not be tolerated. This letter confirms that, as a result of your actions on December 4, 2025, and in accordance with Section 177 of the School Act, you will not be permitted on the land or premises of Chatelech Secondary School for any purpose.

This exclusion will remain in effect until at least January 31, 2026, at which time it will be reviewed. At the end of January 2026, we will review the situation to determine whether the exclusion should continue, be modified, or be lifted. That review will take into account:

1. A meeting with me to talk about expectations for conduct at school events.
2. Assurance that future interactions with staff and members of the school community will be respectful.
3. Confirmation that there have been no further concerns related to conduct.
4. Understanding of expectations related to school staff and school functions.

After the review, I will follow up with you in writing. We trust that there will be no repetition of the type of conduct witnessed on December 4, 2025. Any recurrence of this behaviour, on or off school grounds, may result in an extension and/or expansion of your exclusion.

During the period of this exclusion, you are not permitted to enter Chatelech Secondary School property, including buildings, parking areas, fields, or school grounds, nor attend any school events held on-site. If you need to communicate with the school, please do so through the school office or directly with me in writing. Please do not visit the school in person during this time.

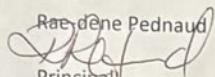
You have the right to appeal this exclusion order by writing to the Superintendent, Kate Kerr, at kkerr@sd46.bc.ca, setting out the reasons for your appeal.

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If you require clarification about the expectations outlined in this notice or have questions about the review process, please feel free to contact me through the school office or by email. I am available to provide further information as needed.



Principal

Chatelech Secondary School



Thursday, December 18th, 2025

Dear Ms. Yates,

I am writing to follow up on our recent telephone conversation on 2025-12-16 and to restate the supports currently in place for your children, as well as the next steps related to the Section 177 exclusion notice.

Supports

I want to be very clear that the Section 177 exclusion applies **only to you** and **does not apply to your children**. We want your children attending Chatelech Secondary School, as regular school attendance supports both their learning and well-being. They remain welcome to attend in person and to participate fully in their educational programs.

As discussed in our telephone call on 2025-12-16 to support continuity of learning during this period, the following measures are in place:

- A work package has been prepared and mailed home for [REDACTED] as discussed.
- Instructions within the package outline how the work is to be completed and submitted.
- [REDACTED] may reach out directly to her teachers for academic clarification or support, should she choose to do so.
- School-based supports remain available to your children, and we remain committed to supporting their successful completion of the school year, including graduation in June.

Our intention is, and continues to be, to work in partnership to support your children's educational success.

[REDACTED] is part of the Francophone program. Please contact the SD93 principal for continuity of learning for [REDACTED] as she is currently only enrolled in PE and a Yoga Elective as part of SD46.

Student Enrollment and Program Options

During our recent conversation, you indicated that you had chosen to remove your children from attending school following the issuance of the Section 177 exclusion. I want to reiterate that the exclusion does not apply to your children, and that we want them attending school for their learning and well-being.

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At this time, your children are not attending in-person classes. The school is committed to providing academic support and materials for your Grade 12 student **through the end of Semester 1** in order to support continuity of learning during this transition period. The work packages that have been prepared and mailed home are intended to support learning through the remainder of Semester 1.

A fully remote learning program is **not available beyond the end of Semester 1**, and the school is not able to continue providing take-home packages or remote instructional support for Semester 2.

We have offered to explore alternative educational options to support your children, including the SPIDER program. At this time, you have indicated that you do not wish to pursue this option.

If you are considering permanently withdrawing your children from Chatelech Secondary School, please notify the school in writing as soon as possible so that appropriate records and next steps can be completed in accordance with district requirements. Until such notice is received, we will continue to consider your children enrolled and welcome to attend school.

Clarification of the Section 177 Exclusion

As outlined in the December 4, 2025 letter, the exclusion under Section 177 of the *School Act* remains in effect until at least January 31, 2026, at which time it will be reviewed.

During the period of exclusion, communication with the school must occur in writing or through the school office.

Review of the Exclusion and Next Steps

As noted in the original letter, the review of the exclusion will consider:

1. A meeting with me to discuss expectations for interactions related to the school.
2. Assurance that future interactions will be respectful.
3. Confirmation that there have been no further conduct-related concerns.
4. Demonstrated understanding of expectations related to school staff and school functions.

I would like to invite you to meet with me **prior to the January review date** to discuss next steps and conditions that would support the review and possible modification or lifting of the exclusion. This meeting is an important part of the review process and an opportunity to establish clarity moving forward.

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Please contact the school office or email me directly to arrange a meeting time.

Moving Forward

We want to work with you in a way that supports your children's education while also ensuring that our school remains a safe and respectful environment for students, staff, and community members.

Respectful communication is required in all interactions with school and district staff, whether in person, in writing, by telephone, or through electronic communication. Adherence to this expectation will be an important consideration in the review of the Section 177 exclusion.

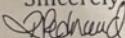
Here are some dates that I am available to meet prior to the review of the Section 177:

- Thursday, January 22nd at 1:00pm
- Thursday, January 23rd at 1:00pm
- Monday, January 26th at 1:00pm

I am available to meet by telephone or Teams or in person at the Sechelt Early Years Centre.

If you have questions about the supports in place for your children or the review process, please contact me in writing or through the school office.

Sincerely,



Rae-dene Pednaud

Principal, Chatelech Secondary School