



Covenant  
Christian School  
*All knowledge through Christ*

## Grievance Policy

# GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## 1. Objective

The objective of a dispute resolution procedure is to promote resolution of questions and disputes by measures based on consultation, co-operation and discussion consistent with Biblical principles and practice.

## 2. Complaints and Disagreement

The manner in which complaints and disagreements are handled can mean the difference between harmony and tension in a community. This policy sets out for parents, employees and others the way to deal with complaints and disagreements consistent with Scripture (Matt 18:15-17).

All steps must be taken in a true spirit of reconciliation. If a teacher has a complaint about a parent, the same steps may be followed. Complaints should be dealt with promptly and not be allowed to fester. A board member must never be the channel for particular complaints. If parents with a complaint approach any board or council members, they must always insist that the parent speak with the staff member concerned, and if still not satisfied, then the matter must be taken up with the appropriate senior staff. At all times procedural fairness must be applied. Both parties must be heard, supported and kept informed of progress

It is important that the Board, and senior staff members are aware of issues that may generate concerns within the educational community. Wise judgement and careful introduction of any changes will help others who have not had the benefit of debate and discussion to see developments in a positive light.

## 3. Dealing with Discord

There is room in the school community for differences: we do not all see things in exactly the same ways (*Rom. 14:1 - 15:6*). While able to cause tensions differences need not be threatening, they are often God's way of enriching the school.

All members of the school community are subject to sin (*1 John 2:1*). There may be times, therefore, when there is discord.

Nevertheless our mutual bond in Christ ensures that we retain a commitment to each other, especially in times of failure and disharmony (*1 Cor. 6:1-7, Phil. 4:2-3*). We recognise, not only that staff, parents and students have shortcomings, but also that sin requires repentance and correction (*1 John 1:9*).

In accordance with Matthew 18:15 and Luke 17:3b-4, if a disagreement arises between a member of staff and either a parent or another member of staff, the parties involved must first meet together in a spirit of submission to the Lord in an attempt to resolve the matter.

When dealing with any grievance or concern we need to consider biblical principles. Specifically, all parties need to:

- treat the matter seriously
- act fairly towards each other
- expect that they will be treated in the same way
- treat others involved in the situation with respect
- act discreetly and maintain confidentiality At all times procedural fairness must apply to all parties in a grievance dispute. In all our dealings with parents and students and employees we aim to cover our moral, legal and spiritual responsibilities. In grievance resolution procedural fairness involves ensuring

all facts are heard from both parties, ensuring both parties know how the matter will be resolved and by whom and knowing how to seek a review of a decision. All decisions must be impartial and if this is difficult an outside mediator (eg PeaceWise) should be involved.

#### **4. Consultation and Mediation involving Employees**

Where a question, grievance, complaint, claim or dispute which relates to the Association's employees arises the following procedure will apply:

- The employee discusses the matter directly with the person concerned with a view to reaching agreement regarding the matter.
- If agreement cannot be reached, the matter should be referred to the immediate supervisor for resolution through discussion with the party/parties concerned.
- If agreement cannot be reached following this step, the matter should be referred to the relevant Deputy Principal or Business Manager as appropriate for resolution through discussion with the party/parties concerned.
- If the matter is not resolved within seven (7) days or the employee feels the matter is inappropriate to be discussed with the immediate supervisor, Deputy Principal or Business Manager, the employee may refer the matter, with full details, to the Principal.
- The Principal will endeavour to resolve the dispute to the satisfaction of the employee and the Association. The Principal should seek to give the employee a response within seven (7) days of it being referred or notify the employee that the Principal is referring the matter to the Board.
- If the employee is not happy with the Principal's decision or the matter relates to the Principal he/she may refer the matter to the Board. The Board will then attempt to resolve the dispute or, if this is not possible, to make a determination on the matter.
- In the case of any dispute arising out of termination or proposed termination of the employment of an employee for failing to uphold the principles of Clauses 3 & 4 of the Memorandum of Association, for incompetence, for misrepresentation, neglect of duty or other misconduct, the dispute may be referred, by either party, to the Appeals Committee. This committee shall be formed by the Board and shall consist of four Association Members, two nominated by the teacher and two nominated by the Board, and one person by the Board of Directors of Christian Education National (CEN), the latter also being its Chairman. Staff and the Board have agreed in staff letters of appointment to abide by the decision of that Committee.
- Nothing in the above shall in any way limit the rights or responsibilities of employers or employees under relevant Industrial Awards.

#### **5. Communication and dispute resolution involving parents**

Parents, especially of students the Secondary School, are often uncertain about whom to contact in the School if they have questions or concerns. Generally speaking, all levels of management of the School and the Board are open to parents, however, we do expect the Biblical principle of first speaking to the person most immediately concerned with the issue. (The same principle applies when one parent has a concern about another parent's children in the School.) The following guidelines should be helpful. In each case you can take a matter to someone with wider or higher responsibility if it has not been answered or resolved. Parents are encouraged to use the incident reporting system on the school's website to register a complaints about staff. However, if parents wish for the complaint to be followed up, they must identify themselves in the feedback. When a parent uses this system, they should expect that the school will contact them in order to resolve the potential conflict with the staff member involved. Identification is not necessary if the complaint is of a serious nature that might result in an allegation that leads to a risk of significant harm for the child or other children.

In the Junior School, if you have a question, concern, complaint or suggestion in relation to:

- your child or some general classroom practice, speak to the class teacher first
- policy or practice in a section of the School, speak to the Infants Coordinator (K – 2) or the Year 3 – 4, Year 5 – 6 Coordinator respectively
- policy or practice in the whole Junior School, speak to the Deputy Principal of Junior School

In the Secondary School, if you have a question, concern or suggestion in relation to:

- your child's general progress or welfare, contact the Home Class Teacher in the first instance
- your child's progress in a particular subject or a question about classroom practice, contact the subject teacher concerned
- policy or practice in a subject area in general, speak to the Subject Coordinator
- policy or practice, or a group of children, speak to the appropriate Year Coordinator in the first instance, then to the Deputy Principal (Pastoral Care 7-12)

For the whole School, if you have a question, concern or suggestion in relation to:

- general bus behaviour , speak to the appropriate Deputy Principal
- discipline across a number of areas of the School, speak to the appropriate Deputy Principal
- student counselling, contact the School Counsellor
- curriculum across the School, contact the Deputy Principal (Curriculum 7-12);
- the Library and its resources, speak to the relevant Librarian
- PIP, community relations, fundraising, or enrolments, contact the Registrar
- fees and other financial matters or maintenance of the buildings and grounds, contact the Business Manager
- general administrative matters (eg bus passes, book lists, etc) contact the School Office

If you have any continuing concern after following the above steps or any question, concern or suggestion in relation to general school policy, practice or resources see the Principal.

Finally, any parent who is unhappy about a decision of the Principal, or who for other reasons would like to take a matter further, may take it to the Board. Any such concern or submission should be in writing directed to the Chairman of the Board.

If in doubt, always start with the Home Class Teacher who is your main point of contact and who will be happy to advise you further.

## **6. Communication and dispute resolution involving students**

Students should generally follow the same procedures as parents. Theoretically, all levels of management of the School and the Board are open to students, however, we do expect the Biblical principle of first speaking to the person most immediately concerned with the issue. (The same principle applies when one student has a grievance against another student in the School.) In general speak to your Home Class Teacher or subject teacher first. If you have a serious complaint or concern, or if you are worried about speaking to a particular member of staff, it may be wiser to discuss it with your parents or Home Class Teacher first and let them raise it with the appropriate staff member on your behalf or come along with you when you raise it.