



ABN 93 392 520 152

PHONE 02 6662 5599

FAX 02 6662 5584

admin@ccs.nsw.edu.au

www.ccs.nsw.edu.au

PO BOX 30
CASINO NSW 2470

93 MANIFOLD ROAD
NORTH CASINO

Grievance Resolution Policy

Next Review: 2017

Reviewed: 2017

*Grow in Grace
and Knowledge*

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PRINCIPAL MR. PETER SPENCE
BOARD CHAIRMAN REV GEORGE AYOUB

A MINISTRY OF THE CASINO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - SINCE 1995

CASINO CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION POLICY

PREAMBLE

Our school motto is: “*Grow in grace and knowledge*”. This encapsulates all that we do. Jesus gave us direction when he said:

“ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

(Matthew 22:37-39)

This direction is reflected in all that we do.

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Within the community of our school there is a great deal of formal and informal communication and it is not the intention of the school to restrict the relationships that are an important part of the life of the school. However, scripture warns, “The tongue has the power of life and death.” (Proverbs 18:21. NIV.) The words we use are very powerful and can do considerable damage. In order to minimize damage the principles set out in Matthew 18 should be followed, not in a legalistic way, but as a model given by Christ.

Within the context of Casino Christian School this should happen as follows, whether the person concerned is a parent/ caregiver, staff member or student (see “Dealing With Student Concerns” in the Further Procedural Matters at the end of this document):

POLICY & PROCEDURES:

FIRST PRINCIPLE:

Talk first with the person with whom you have a problem.

“If your brother sins against you go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.” (Matt. 18:15.)

It is vital that Christians should pray about an issue before trying to resolve it bearing in mind that we must not sin when we get angry, “In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.” (Eph.4:26), and that we must always be ready to forgive and to accept the responsibility to live at peace with others as far as it is our responsibility. (Rom. 12:18.)

In the first instance, any conflicts should be addressed informally between the two parties involved. The aim is to find out whether the problem you see is real or just a communication issue. If you then believe the other party is wrong you should lovingly correct them and restore the relationship before it suffers any further harm. This should be done in a private manner. If, and only if, this does not lead to conflict resolution, after prayerful consideration, the matter may be taken to the next stage.

SECOND PRINCIPLE:

If you can't resolve the problem, take a wiser person with you.

“But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” (Matt. 18:16)

Prior to involving others in any disagreement it must be borne in mind that to do so reduces the likelihood of the matter being resolved without some damage to the relationship with the other person. Although this may be healed over time it is wise to count the cost before taking this course of action.

If it is considered that the matter needs to be taken before witnesses it is generally appropriate that this be the person most directly responsible for the person against whom the complaint is made within the authority structure of the school. At Casino Christian School, this is the Deputy Principal or Primary Coordinator.

In dealing with any issue the Deputy Principal or Primary Coordinator will firstly ensure that the preceding steps have been undertaken and that the accused has been given the opportunity to respond to any accusations made against him/ her. In doing so the Deputy Principal or Primary Coordinator may make available any documentation or other information pertaining to the problem.

THIRD PRINCIPLE:

If you can't resolve the problem, take a wiser person with you.

“But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” (Matt. 18:16)

Prior to involving others in any disagreement it must be borne in mind that to do so reduces the likelihood of the matter being resolved without some damage to the relationship with the other person. Although this may be healed over time it is wise to count the cost before taking this course of action.

If it is considered that the matter needs to be taken before witnesses it is generally appropriate that this be the person most directly responsible for the person against whom the complaint is made within the authority structure of the school. At Casino Christian School, this is the Principal.

In dealing with any issue the Principal will firstly ensure that the preceding steps have been undertaken and that the accused has been given the opportunity to respond to any accusations made against him/ her. In doing so the Principal may make available any documentation or other information pertaining to the problem.

*** Please see Raising concerns and Grievances further in document for extra detail**

FORTH PRINCIPLE:

Only refer matters to the Board when the prior steps have been tried.

“If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.” (Matt. 18:17)

If the intervention of the Principal does not result in a resolution of the dispute the matter should then be referred to the “church.” The school is part of the ministry of the Casino Presbyterian Church. The Board, then, becomes “the church”.

If a matter is referred to the school Board it should be in writing and addressed to the Board Chairman. It is not appropriate for individual Board members to be approached separately. Board proceedings are confidential. Any Board member who is approached should refer the matter to the Board Chairman.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the School Board resolution they need to resolve their grievance or review their position as a member of the school community.

The Principal will keep a record of any such formal complaints, and the outcomes of these complaints in PCSchools.

FIFTH PRINCIPLE:

Preserve unity as much as you on your part can do.

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:2-3.)

You should not discuss your grievances with other people outside of the conflict resolution circle. The Body of Christ is damaged when we gossip about problems or when we talk to others about issues they do not need to know about. Sometimes, after an issue has been resolved between two people, the problem recurs because others have discussed the issue without knowledge of how it was resolved. Christians are called to be patient, humble, forgiving and keeping unity as much as they can.

FURTHER PROCEDURAL MATTERS & DETAILS:

Dealing With Student Concerns:

Students may need adult assistance to deal with their concerns due to factors such as their age, lack of understanding, or reluctance to voice concerns to school authorities.

Therefore it is understood that the parents/ caregivers of students may undertake these resolution steps on behalf of, or in partnership with, their child.

In the day-to-day life of the school students are free to approach their class teacher, the Deputy Principal or Principal in regard to matters that may arise during the day. The procedures in place in the Grievance Policy do not replace that freedom.

Support for the Complainant:

At all times during this process, support for the person(s) involved in the concern(s) will be offered and provided. Such support may be pastoral or counseling support.

Raising Concerns, Complaints or Grievances

Once a concern reaches the third principle stage the following procedure applies:

- a. **The initial presentation of the grievance must be in writing to the Principal.** If parents or guardians feel that a decision has been taken which has had an adverse, undeserved impact on their child or on them, they should write directly to the principal, clearly setting out their reasons why the relevant decision should be reconsidered.
- b. **Parents are welcome to meet with the Principal.** Parents are welcome to meet with the principal and other relevant members of staff, subsequent to the Principal receiving a written description of their grievance. Parents may wish to have a support person present in order to ensure that their concerns are properly heard and understood and that procedural fairness is observed.
- c. **The Principal or his delegate will conduct a review of the decision in a timely manner.** Ordinarily the Principal will delegate the formal response to the grievance to the Deputy Principal or administrative officer (if the grievance relates to a decision or action of the Principal). The

review must be completed in a timely way with a view to the proper management of the school and the wellbeing of the parents and/or children involved.

- d. **The Principal's delegate will evaluate the information and documentation on which the original decision was based.**
- e. **The Principal's delegate will determine if it is necessary to consult students, parents or staff members further for more information.**
- f. **The Principal's delegate will write a report and recommendation to the Principal, who will convey the outcome of the review to the parents.**
- g. **Parents are welcome to meet personally with the Principal's delegate, or the Principal, if they are dissatisfied with the decision or the process.** If still dissatisfied parents may then appeal directly to the school board by writing to the Chairman of the board, setting out their reasons for dissatisfaction.
- h. **The Chairman of the board will ordinarily bring the parent's concerns to the whole board.** The board will seek advice from the Principal and any decision subsequently made will be regarded as final, notwithstanding the right of parents to seek further legal redress.