Acknowledgement: This policy was modified from the policy of Coffs Harbour Christian School

GRIEVANCE
RESOLUTION
POLICY

Instituted: 2009
Next Review: 2014

Principal: Mr Neil Capps
Board Chairman Rev George Ayoub

A Ministry of the Casino Presbyterian Church - Since 1995
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.

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 Secondary Coordinator or Primary Coordinator.

In dealing with any issue the Secondary Coordinator 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 Secondary Coordinator 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.

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. 8:17)

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 a Complaints Register.
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:

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.

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 Against the Principal:
Such matters should be referred directly to the Board Chairman in the first instance, and should be in writing.

Procedural Fairness:
It is important that concerns, complaints and grievances are dealt with quickly and efficiently. All reasonable steps should be taken to resolve issues within a week of them being raised, and that the complainant receives communication from the school quickly in relation to any concerns, complaints and grievances.