

Covenant Christian School

Complaints Policy

Introduction

"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification."
(Rom 14v19)

We are exhorted in the scriptures to "avoid foolish arguments" (2 Tim 2v23) but in a fallen world there are inevitably times when mistakes are made and a parent in the school has reason to complain. Complaints come in various forms and can refer to many different aspects of school life. Since they can damage relationships and become the source of division within the school, even the smallest complaint should be handled sensitively.

The Complaints Procedure

Before a complaint is made, it is important to ascertain the facts on which it rests. Many complaints made by parents are based on their children's reports. Experience shows that these reports are often incomplete. Parents are therefore strongly advised to check the details of a report before proceeding. If it appears that a complaint is justified and it is directed against an individual, the complainant, in the light of Jesus' teaching (Matt 18v15-17) should first speak to the individual directly or, if the individual is a child, to his or her parents, remembering the exhortation (Eph 4v2), that we should be "completely humble and gentle, patient, bearing with one another in love".

If the parent wishes to take the matter further or if it is a more general complaint not necessarily involving an individual then the complainant should refer to the class co-ordinator and/or the school co-ordinator. Should the issue still remain unresolved the parent should make a detailed, written, formal complaint to the Management Committee who must investigate the whole affair thoroughly and respond in writing to the complainant and anyone about whom the complaint has been made within one month.

It is conceivable that the parent might still feel his or her grievance has not been properly addressed. In that case the Management Committee should within a further two weeks refer him or her to the secretary of the Christian Education Trust who will appoint an arbitration panel made up of two Trustees, not working in the school and not previously associated with the case, and an independent person drawn from the senior staff of a local Christian school. This arbitration should be completed within two months from the date of the referral. The parent will be entitled to attend panel hearings either by him or herself or with another person of their choosing.

The school will keep written records of all complaints indicating whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing. This written record will include any actions taken by the school, regardless of whether they are upheld. It will provide copies of the findings and recommendations of the panel to all concerned including the complainant. All associated correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential.

In 1 Cor 6v1-7 the apostle Paul encourages the Corinthians to sort out their complaints amongst themselves rather than take it to the Roman courts. We likewise prefer to deal with complaints within the school and the Trust rather than being taken to external tribunals.

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