



Grievance Policy

John Calvin School – Grievance Policy

POLICY DATES: JOHN CALVIN SCHOOL GRIEVANCE POLICY			
Formulated	August 2015		
Implemented	September 2015	Reviewed	December 2016
Next Review Due	December 2017		
POLICY AUTHORISATION			
Principal	Daniel Coote	Signature	

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Purpose

To provide a set of principles and procedures for the resolution of grievances, complaints or appeals, hereafter referred to as grievances.

Policy Statement

The Free Reformed School Association, operating the John Calvin School is an active Christian community which acknowledges the lordship of Jesus Christ in all its relationships. The Association is committed to ensuring a harmonious, fair and just working and learning environment. From time to time, however, concerns regarding educational, behavioural or school environment issues may arise that are not easily resolved. For this reason the Association has developed a set of procedures to work through unresolved situations, or where an action or decision is considered to be unfair or inappropriate. This is the reality of sin and our inability to live in perfect harmony with one another. However, through God's grace and forgiveness, and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we strive to reconcile differences and resolve all conflict amicably.

To this end we are guided by the Scriptures:

"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. 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 18:15,16)

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." (Eph 4:29)

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you." (Eph 4:32)

All grievances will be dealt with in a supportive environment without victimisation or intimidation of anyone connected with the grievance either during or subsequent to a grievance resolution procedure.

Recommended Processes for Resolving Grievances

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This document outlines steps to be taken by:

- Staff
- Parents
- Students
- Members of the Community

1. Informal Process

As a first step informal and private attempts at resolution or reconciliation should be undertaken between the parties concerned.

2. Formal process

Once a formal process is commenced mediation is an available option at any stage of the process. This will be facilitated by the School and conducted by a person mutually agreed upon by the parties to the dispute.

(a) for student grievances

Complainants may refer grievances to a Teacher in the first instance. If the complainant prefers, their grievance may be submitted in writing to the Teacher. Upon receipt of the grievance the Teacher will assess the situation and organise to meet with the complainant and/or other parties involved to resolve the situation as quickly as possible in an informal manner. The complainant may request that a support person of their choosing accompanies them to any meeting regarding their grievance.

The Teacher may determine if other members of the School Community need to be consulted, such as parents, principal, counsellor or an independent expert. Mediation may need to be facilitated in some cases as a result of this consultation.

At the conclusion of the grievance resolution process both parties in the dispute will be asked if the matter has been satisfactorily resolved. If not, the complainant may refer the matter to the Principal for further discussion/resolution.

(b) for grievances of staff, parents and members of the community

The complainant must refer the grievance to the Principal in writing.

Upon receipt of the grievance the Principal will:

- ensure that the person against whom the complaint is made is informed and given reasonable time to respond.
- organise to meet with the complainant and/or other parties involved to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

Both parties may request that a support person of their choosing accompanies them to any meeting regarding their grievance.

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If the complainant is not satisfied with the result or handling of their grievance by John Calvin School staff, the complainant may submit a formal complaint to the Chairman of the Board of the Free Reformed School Association.

All meetings, discussions and outcomes will be documented and given to the complainant in writing. In the case of a student complainant, a copy will also be placed on the student's file.

(c) for grievances against the Principal

The complainant may refer the grievance to the Chairman of the School Board in writing. Contact between the Principal and the Complainant would not occur (except in an exceptional circumstance) and a nominated senior staff member would assume responsibility for school communication with the complainant.

The role of the Chairman of the School Board is to:

- i. ensure the School Board is properly briefed and the individual members of the Board adhere to the mutually agreed guidelines.
- ii. ensure the Principal is accorded natural justice and the guidelines for the role of the Board are adhered to.
- iii. be responsible for controlling the publicity and communication to the whole school body when the complaint is filed and concluded.

The role of the Board is to ensure correct processes are observed along mutually agreed guidelines.

Upon receipt of the grievance the Chairman of the School Board will:

- i. ensure that the Principal is informed and given reasonable time to respond.
- ii. organise to meet with the complainant and/or other parties involved to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

Both parties may request that a support person of their choosing accompanies them to any meeting regarding their grievance.

Where the matter enters a formal process, it is expected that all parties, including the School, shall maintain documentary records of meetings, correspondence, steps taken to resolve the matter under these guidelines. At this time, parties involved should be asked for background information, and notes will be taken of the information furnished. Furthermore, any records, once the formal complaint is resolved, will be kept securely and confidentially in a file established for the purpose by the Principal.

Procedural Fairness (also referred to as Natural Justice)

Both individuals who are the subject of a complaint and individuals making complaints have the right to be afforded procedural fairness or natural justice.

A person who is the subject of a complaint has the right to:

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- be informed of the nature of the allegations in the first instance
- respond to the allegations
- an impartial hearing, and fair and equitable treatment
- an understanding that all reasonable care will be taken to ensure the matter is handled confidentially
- engage the person or organisation of their choice to provide assistance and support throughout the course of the matter (e.g. assisting with the preparation of responses, representation, accompanying to meetings, etc)
- access to any documentation to be relied on by any person in the hearing relating to the complaint (including the person hearing the complaint)

A person making a complaint has the right to:

- an understanding that all reasonable care will be taken to ensure the matter is handled confidentially
- an impartial hearing, and fair and equitable treatment
- engage the person or organisation of their choice to provide assistance and support throughout the course of the matter
- access to any documentation to be relied on by any person in the hearing relating to the complaint (including the person hearing the complaint)

External Arbitration

At any stage the complainant can seek recourse to appropriate legal means at their own expense. The solution is then no longer in the hands of the complainants or the School.

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Source	Student	Parent	Staff	Community Member	Anyone	Mediation is available at any stage
Against	Any member of the John Calvin School community				Principal	
Contact	Teacher		Principal			
	Chairman, School Board					
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