

## Policy: Concerns and Complaints

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### Policy Statement

Jireh Christian School responds to complaints in a fair and consistent manner and provides members of the school community with procedures to follow. Outside agencies will be asked for advice in any situation where the Board is unsure how to resolve the issue.

Problems are likely to arise if parents or students feel that the school is not open to their concerns. In dealing with all situations of a difficult or delicate nature the Board endorses the Matthew 18 principle for resolving problems – in the first instance go to the person involved.

If any problem arises concerning a child's welfare or progress at school, then parents are encouraged to first discuss this with the child's teacher. It is better to have a direct complaint to a member of staff than to have parents or students sharing their dissatisfaction with others. Parents and students like to feel valued and involved with the school and they should be encouraged to voice their concerns. This is more likely to occur where the culture of the school is open and complaints are received in a positive manner.

An expression of concern, or a simple query, may grow into a painful matter if parents or students feel they have been brushed aside. Equally, issues with the potential to become acutely difficult may dwindle and fade if they are handled well at the initial stage.

### Procedural Guidelines

The key principles for the handling of complaints are:

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| <i>The school is open to the concerns of parents and students</i>   |
| <i>Complaints are received in a positive manner</i>   |
| <i>Parents and students can expect to be taken seriously and can approach any member of staff about their concerns</i>      |
| <i>Information about complaints is clear and readily available</i>  |
| <i>Concerns are dealt with speedily and those who have raised them are kept informed about progress</i>                     |
| <i>It is not acceptable for students to receive adverse treatment because they or their parents have raised a complaint</i> |
| <i>Clear confidential files and a log are kept</i>  |
| <i>Confidentiality is respected and maintained so far as is possible</i>  |
| <i>Resolution of the matter is sought</i>   |
| <i>Staff training covers the handling of complaints</i>   |

The following points determine the overarching approach to all complaints. The appropriate policies and procedures contain the specific details of how to deal with complaints from parents, complaints about staff, complaints concerning child abuse and the administrative aspects of recording complaints.

1. Any concern or complaint is treated as strictly confidential
2. In the first instance, concerns should be discussed with the other party e.g. teacher, Principal or Chairperson. If it is a classroom/teacher concern, the teacher should be first approached, then the Principal, and finally the Board.

3. All complaints, including any about the Principal, should be referred directly to the Principal (or Chairperson) either in verbal or written form.
4. All complaints are acknowledged and documented.
5. In dealing with complaints, employers must act in accordance with conditions of relevant employment agreements and current legislation.
6. Appropriate action will be instigated to resolve issues.
7. Unresolved complaints will be made in written form to the Chairperson of the Board.
8. If the complaint is formal (i.e. made in writing), the complainant will be informed of the outcomes in writing or in person by the Principal or Chairperson of the Board.

Review schedule: Triennially

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| <b>ADOPTED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b> |                                 |             |                            |
| Date                                | 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2017 | Chairperson | <b>R Thornton (Acting)</b> |

Reviewed Date 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Chairperson **W Peat**

Reviewed Date 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Chairperson **M Causley**