



MAPLE RIDGE
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

APPEALS POLICY

Policy Type: Administrative

Applies To: All Staff, Students, Parents

Approved By: Lead Principal

Policy Reviewed: every 2 years

Adopted: 2002

Revisions: 2010, 2018

PURPOSE:

Although the MRCS community strives to respect diversity and work in harmony with each other, disagreements may occur from time to time. This policy is intended to outline the procedure in which parents and/or guardians have concerns in regards to a staff member or issue at school.

DEFINITIONS:

PROCEDURES:

Teachers fully recognize what an important role parents play in the education of their children. Parents and teachers are partners in this process. Communication between the home and school is vital to healthy relationships that nurture children. Parents can email or make arrangements to speak with teachers if they want to check on progress or discuss other concerns. The Educational Support Coordinator may also be brought in if a child is having difficulties in school.

Handling concerns:

- If a parent has questions or concerns, they should contact the teacher either by email or by phoning the school and arranging a time to meet in person.
- If further concerns arise or continue, the next person to involve in discussions is the divisional leader at the appropriate level of the school – the Assistant Principal for K-7 or the Vice Principal for 8-12. In these discussions, the parent should meet with the divisional leader and classroom teacher; however, if there are concerns with how the teacher is handling the process, the parent may choose to only meet with the divisional leader.
- The next step for ongoing concerns is to involve the Lead Principal. The Lead Principal would meet with the parent along with the divisional leader.



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- In the event that concerns continue, the next step is to contact the Chair of the Board. The Chair of the Board would determine if written documentation would suffice or if the parents should meet with an ad-hoc committee from the Board to hear the particular concern from the parent.
 - Final authority and decisions rest with the Board. However, a parent may appeal to an Ombudsperson via the Society of Christian Schools of BC to help with mediation as detailed by the SCSBC School Ombudsperson Policy.

SCSBC SCHOOL OMBUDSPERSON POLICY (As adopted by Maple Ridge Christian School)

The Office of School Ombudsperson

The Society of Christian Schools in BC (SCSBC) in co-operation with the Federation of Independent School Associations (FISA) and in consultation with the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools has established the position of Independent School Ombudsperson, “the ombudsperson,” to investigate complaints made by persons affected by a decision, act or omission of an independent school or school authority that is a member of the SCSBC.

Role of the Ombudsperson

The Ombudsperson is available to assist those persons who have exhausted all avenues of redress or review within their independent school or school authority to resolve a dispute. The Ombudsperson is not an arbitrator and does not have the ability to make a binding decision in a matter. The Ombudsperson, however, does provide an opportunity for an external review of a decision or action of a school. The Ombudsperson, having completed an investigation, can make a recommendation to the school or school authority in an attempt to resolve the complaint. If the Ombudsperson is not satisfied with the school’s response to the written report, the Ombudsperson may issue a report of the circumstances to the SCSBC and to the FISA.



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Appointment of the Ombudsperson

The School Ombudsperson for the SCSBC is a person appointed by the SCSBC and approved by the Board of Directors of the Federation of Independent School Associations who is qualified through training and experience to act as an impartial investigator of complaints.

Making a Complaint

Any person or their legal guardian affected by a decision, recommendation, act or omission of an independent school or school authority may ask the Ombudsperson to conduct an investigation if the complainant believes that he or she was treated in a manner contrary to the principles of natural justice; that the school applied a policy incorrectly or inconsistently; or that the decision or action of the school was contrary to the philosophy and mission of the school. The Ombudsperson cannot investigate a matter related in any way to the employment of a person by the school. The complainant must agree at the time of making the complaint to accept the Ombudsperson as an unbiased party in the complaint and not to compel the Ombudsperson to give evidence in a court or in other proceedings of a judicial nature in respect of anything coming to the Ombudsperson's knowledge in the course of investigating of the complaint. If the complainant does not accept the Ombudsperson as an unbiased person in the matter in dispute, the complainant may ask the SCSBC to designate another ombudsperson for that matter.

Powers of the Ombudsperson

The Ombudsperson has the power to investigate a complaint despite any provision in the independent school's policy or procedures that a decision, recommendation, or act is final or that no appeal lies in respect of it.

The Ombudsperson is not authorized to investigate a decision, recommendation, act or omission in respect of which there is a right of appeal, objection, or review until after that right has been exercised. The Ombudsperson is only authorized to receive complaints related to independent schools in the Association that appointed the Ombudsperson. (Ombudspersons appointed by the Associate Member Group are also authorized to receive complaints from independent schools or school authorities, which are not members in the five associations which are members of the FISA). The Ombudsperson may refuse to investigate or cease to investigate a complaint, if in the opinion of the Ombudsperson it is reasonable to do so. The Ombudsperson may receive or obtain information from a person in the



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manner the Ombudsperson considers appropriate and in the Ombudsperson's discretion may conduct a hearing.

Procedures

A complaint to the Ombudsperson must be in writing. If the Ombudsperson investigates a matter, the Ombudsperson must notify the school affected and any other person the Ombudsperson considers appropriate to notify in the circumstances. SCSBC School Ombudsperson Policy January 2008, Page 7 - If, during an investigation, the Ombudsperson decides to hold a hearing, the complainant, the independent school, and any other affected persons must be given the opportunity to make representations. A person is not entitled as a right to a hearing before the Ombudsperson. If the Ombudsperson decides not to investigate or further investigate a complaint, or if at the conclusion of the investigation, decides that the complaint has not been substantiated, the Ombudsperson must record the decision in writing and notify both the complainant and the school as soon as is reasonable of the decision and the reasons for it. Upon completion of an investigation the ombudsperson shall provide a written report to the parties involved. The Ombudsperson may request the independent school or school authority to notify the Ombudsperson of any steps which have been taken to give effect to the recommendation or, if no steps have been or are proposed to be taken, the reasons for not following the recommendation. If the independent school or school authority does not act on the Ombudsperson's recommendation within a reasonable period of time, the Ombudsperson shall report the Ombudsperson's original recommendations and the school's response, if any, to the SCSBC and to the FISA.

Confidentiality

The Ombudsperson will hold in confidence all information that comes to his or her knowledge in performing his or her duties. If the Ombudsperson investigates a matter, the Ombudsperson must notify the independent school or school authority affected and any other person the Ombudsperson considers appropriate to notify in the circumstances of the name of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.



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RESPONSIBILITIES:

REFERENCES: