

# Appendix A – approved 2023-10-09

## ***Conflict Resolution and Grievance Policy***

### **Objective & Scope:**

To establish biblical guidelines for the resolution of issues in the operation of Providence Christian School. These guidelines are to be followed whenever there is an issue concerning any aspect of Providence Christian School's operations, between any two parties connected in a direct way to the school. This includes students, parents, staff, volunteers, administration, and Board.

### **Definitions:**

**Issue** - any concern, complaint, dispute, or grievance.

**Concern** - a matter of interest of importance to a person.

**Complaint** - an expression of dissatisfaction with a situation or a decision that has been made.

**Dispute** - A disagreement or misunderstanding that results in broken fellowship or trust between parties and may disrupt the lines of authority in the school, or which (in the judgment of either disputant) could threaten the successful implementation of Providence Christian School objectives and goals.

**Grievance** - A wrong or hardship suffered, real or supposed, due to a decision made by one in authority which forms legitimate grounds for complaint based on the following three guidelines where a board delegation would consider evaluation after the issue has been brought to appropriate lower levels of authority.

- Allegation that there has been a violation of a school policy.
- Allegation that a policy was implemented in an unbiblical way.
- Allegation that there is evidence of organizational mission drift.

### **Biblical Basis and Process:**

In accordance with Matthew 5, whoever realizes that an issue exists is responsible for addressing it. "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First, be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24 ESV).

Love, grace, respect, and a refusal to gossip should characterize the relationship between our board, staff, faculty, volunteers, parents, and students. This is particularly important when addressing issues. Resolution should be sought directly by those involved and then, if necessary, proceed through higher

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levels of authority, in accordance with Matthew 18. While this passage specifically addresses sin, it provides a framework that may be applied to the general resolution of issues, with the overriding principle of maintaining unity and peace within the body of Christ while glorifying Him in all we do. “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church” (Matthew 18:15-17 ESV).

Philippians 4 and James 3 also provide guidance supporting conflict resolution. All communication should be conducted with compassion and understanding but without compromising biblical principles or school policies.

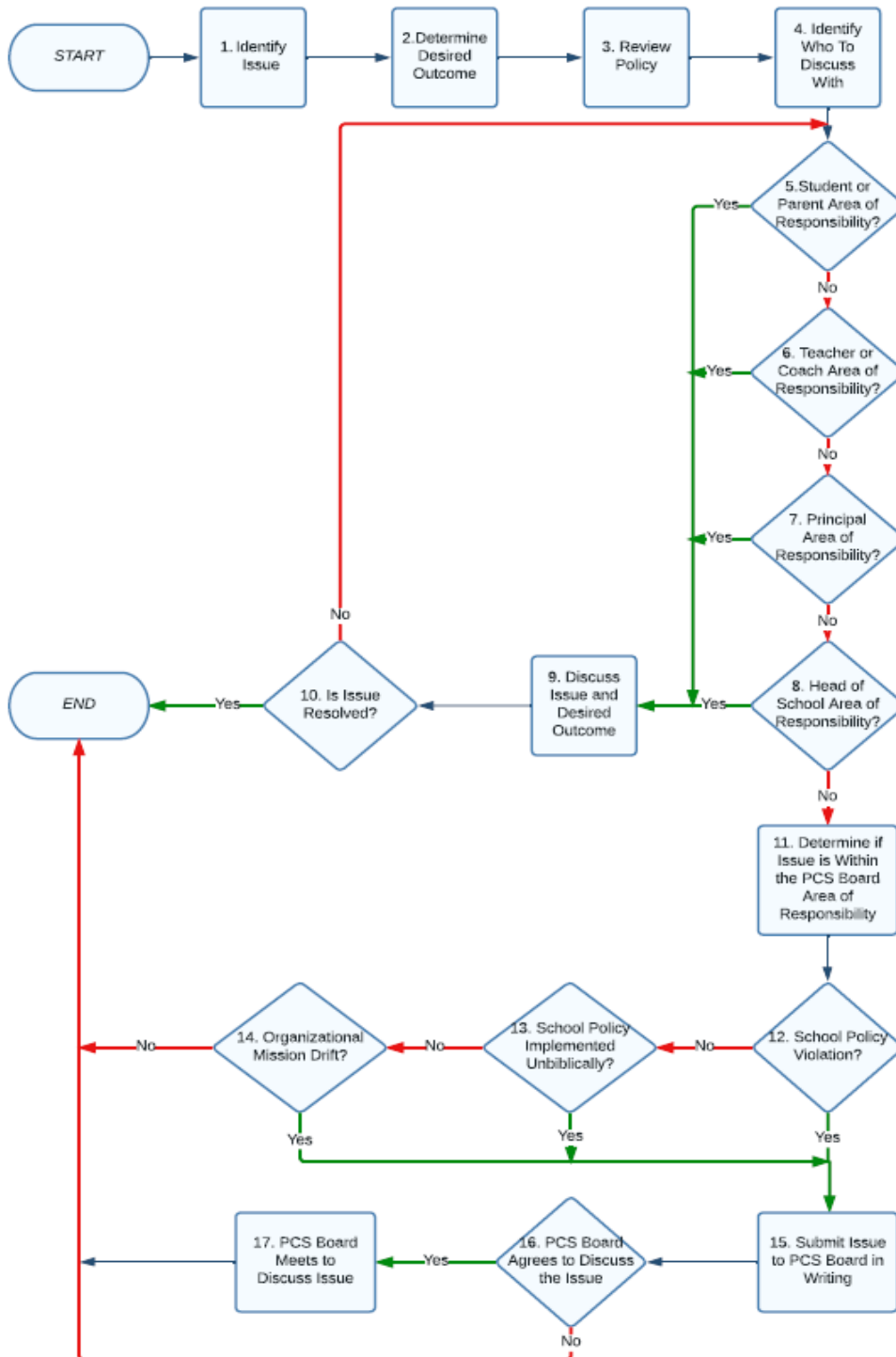
Whoever has an issue should first take the matter directly to the person he has issue with or to the person over that area of responsibility. For example, teachers have responsibility for their classrooms, principals have responsibility for their schools, the Head of School has responsibility for PCS, and the school board oversees PCS and the HoS. If a student is involved, they may handle the matter directly or by/with their parent.

The person bringing the issue should consider the desired outcome and how to achieve resolution. If an issue is unable to be resolved directly with the responsible person, then it should be taken to the next level of authority until resolved. Advancing an issue prematurely to a higher level of authority may result in the matter being directed back to the correct people. If the matter is to be submitted to the school board, then it must be submitted in writing to the board chairman. All board, staff, faculty, volunteers, parents, and students are expected to follow this guidance. If a response is needed after the issue has been presented, the response should be given in an appropriate manner and within a reasonable time frame.

**Progression of authority: student/parent > teacher > principal > Head of School > Board**

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## Flowchart:



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## **Flowchart Steps:**

1 – Identify Issue – whoever identifies an issue is responsible for bringing that issue forward to the appropriate personnel. This person will be referred to as the issue presenter. If a student is involved, they may handle the matter directly or by/with their parent.

2 – Determine desired outcome – the issue presenter should not only evaluate the issue from a biblical and school policy standpoint but also with a determination as to what will resolve the issue and how to accomplish that.

3 – Review Policy – prior to presenting the issue to anyone, the grievance policy and its biblical foundation should be examined to ensure that resolution can be pursued with compassion and unity in order to honor God in all we do.

4 – Identify who to discuss with – the presenter should evaluate who the appropriate person is with which to discuss the issue. If the issue is clearly between two individuals, then this is obvious. However, this may require determining who has responsibility for a given area. For example, teachers have responsibility for their classrooms, coaches have responsibility for their teams, principals have responsibility for their schools, the Head of School has responsibility for PCS, and the school board oversees PCS and the HoS. Steps 5, 6, 7, and 8 are part of this determination. Note that several people have multiple roles regarding their relationship with PCS. For example, a teacher may also be parent of a student.

5 – Student or parent area of responsibility – students are responsible for themselves and their actions and behavior. Parents are responsible for their children and may present with them or in their place. If this is the appropriate person(s) to discuss the issue with, then the presenter moves on to step 9. If this is not the appropriate person(s), then the presenter moves on to step 6.

6 – Teacher or Coach area of responsibility – Teachers are responsible for all that goes on in their classrooms, including instruction, homework assignments, and discipline. Coaches similarly are responsible for their teams, whether on campus or off campus. If this is the appropriate person to discuss the issue with, then the presenter moves on to step 9. If this is not the appropriate person, then the presenter moves on to step 7.

7 – Principal area of responsibility – PCS has a principal for each of the Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric schools. The principals are responsible for the teachers, students, staff, property, etc. under their purview. If this is the appropriate person to discuss the issue with, then the presenter moves on to step 9. If this is not the appropriate person, then the presenter moves on to step 8.

8 – Head of School area of responsibility – the Head of School is responsible for everything related to PCS, including the Principals, staff, teachers, coaches, administrators, volunteers, students, vendors, property, etc. with a focus on executing school policy. Typically, the HoS will not be the first person to discuss an issue with, as most responsibilities are delegated to others.

9 – Discuss issue and desired outcome – the presenter will discuss the issue with the appropriate person(s). The desired outcome will be examined and all parties will work to resolve the issue following the guidance in this policy. Most issues should be resolved at this direct level.

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10 – Issue is resolved – if the issue is satisfactorily resolved, then the matter is over. Should resolution not be achieved, then the next higher level of responsibility should be determined (recycle through steps 5-8) and the presenter will discuss the issue with that person per step 9.

11 - Determine if issue is within the PCS Board area of responsibility – most issues will be addressed within steps 5-10. However, there are three specific areas that will be considered by the board, as determined in steps 12-14:

- Allegation that there has been a violation of a school policy (step 12).
- Allegation that a policy was implemented in an unbiblical way (step 13).
- Allegation that there is evidence of organizational mission drift (step 14).

12 – School Policy violation – the presenter must determine if the issue is a violation of school policy. This would require an examination of a PCS Policy Manual (parent, student, or employee). If this exists, then the presenter moves to step 15. If this is not the case, then the presenter continues with step 13.

13 – School Policy implemented unbiblically - the presenter must determine if the issue is due to an unbiblical implementation of school policy. This would require an examination of the PCS Policy Manual (PGM), and the parent, student, and employee handbooks along with determining a biblical basis for why the implementation is/was unbiblical. If this is the case, then the presenter moves to step 15. If this is not the case, then the presenter continues with step 14.

14 – Organizational mission drift - the presenter must determine if the issue is due to organizational mission drift. This would require an examination of the PCS Policy Manual (PGM), and the parent, student, and employee handbooks in order to identify the mission that has drifted. If this is the case, then the presenter moves to step 15. If this is not the case, then the presenter has no more options for the issue. If he has not yet presented the issue, then he should seek assistance to better determine a responsible person (step 4).

15 – Submit issue to PCS board chairman in writing – if the issue meets the criteria in steps 12-14, then the presenter must submit the issue to the board in writing, including the desired outcome for the issue. The written submission ensures clarity of the submission and allows the board to examine the issue prior to a meeting.

16 – PCS board delegation agrees to discuss the issue – the PCS board delegation will review the written submission and determine if the issue is within the board's area of responsibility. If so, then the issue moves on to step 17. If not, then the full board will not discuss the issue and the process moves to step 18.

17 – PCS board discusses the issue – once the issue has been accepted for discussion, the full board will discuss the issue and seek resolution.

18 – Board responds to presenter (not shown on draft flowchart, but between step 17 and END) – the board will respond to the written issue submission. If it was not accepted for discussion, then the response will include a brief explanation as to why it did not meet the criteria. If the issue did meet the

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criteria, then the board will submit a response including the resolution of the issue and how it was/is being implemented.

19 – END – by this point, the issue has been resolved or determined to not be an issue.

### **Individual Board Member to Head of School - Governance Issues:**

- A. If a specific issue arises during a Board meeting, board members may address the Head of School with honesty, respect, and diplomatic communication. If the issue is unresolved, then it may be channeled through the chairman if further discussion is needed.
- B. If the Board decides further investigation is warranted, the Head of School will meet with the Board in executive session to present his perspective and answer questions.
- C. If the Board decides against the Head of School (2/3 vote required), the Board will attach a written description of their decision to the Head of School's annual job evaluation.
- D. If the Board does not decide against the Head of School, any Board member(s) who is (are) still not satisfied will be instructed by the Board to drop the issue.