



<b>NAME: 01.05 DISPUTE RESOLUTION</b>	<b>VERSION: 2</b>
<b>ADOPTED: JANUARY 21, 2013</b>	<b>REVIEW: 2015-2016</b>

**REVIEW EVERY 3 YEARS**

**PREAMBLE**

The purpose of the Dispute Resolution Policy is to provide a student, parent or employee with the opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the resolution of a dispute or grievance. These internal procedures are a conciliatory and non-legal process based on the principles in Matthew 22:37-39 and John 13:34-35 in conjunction with the RCS Mission statement, 1.7 Community Standards, 1.2.2 Core Values and the Society *Membership Agreement*.

A great deal of informal communication occurs within the school community and, as such, most disputes should be amicably reconciled directly between the parties concerned. Before the Dispute Resolution process is initiated, every effort should be made to resolve the dispute through informal discussions with the parties involved.

**GRIEVANCE DEFINED**

1. A grievance is a formal objection made on the basis of something believed to be wrong, unfair, misleading, or of poor quality.
2. It may include a specific complaint about practices at RCS, an event or decision made in contradiction to a school policy or procedure.
3. A grievance may be about the conduct of a person enrolled at or employed at Richmond Christian School or a volunteer serving in the school.
4. A grievance is not a complaint stemming from a criminal act or omission. Such complaints must be taken directly and promptly to the Superintendent or Board Chair and will be dealt with according to the legislative rules or regulations of British Columbia.

**DISPUTE RESOLUTION EXPECTATIONS**

5. All employees, students, society members and parents are expected to promote and maintain a respectful school environment by adhering to the following standards of conduct and personally responsible behavior:

- a. Being courteous, polite, respectful and considerate towards others;
- b. Acting with honesty and integrity, abiding by and upholding all rules and regulations and assisting or encouraging others to do the same;
- c. Engaging in conversation only with individuals relevant to the process, including those with different strengths and opinions;
- d. Encouraging and supporting individuals to learn and practice personal conflict resolution and respectful workplace skills; and
- e. Managing conflicts using the dispute resolution processes.

## **INFORMAL PROCEDURE**

The dispute resolution process should initially follow this informal progression:

7. Classroom grievance.
  - a. All concerns relating to the classroom environment and its operation must first be presented to the teacher.
    - i. The parties must sit down uninterrupted to discuss the dispute and seek out a mutually acceptable resolution.
  - b. If the dispute is not resolved the parties must meet with the campus Principal.
  - c. If the dispute is not resolved the parties must meet with the campus Principal and the Superintendent.
  - d. If the dispute is not resolved the parties must bring the matter to the attention of the Board through the formal dispute resolution process set out below.
  
8. Parent, guardian, student or society member grievance.
  - a. If a parent, guardian, student or society member has a grievance about the general operation of the school they must bring that concern to the appropriate campus Principal.
    - i. The parties must sit down uninterrupted to discuss the dispute and seek out a mutually acceptable resolution.
  - b. If the dispute is not resolved the parties must meet with the campus Principal and the Superintendent.
  - c. If the dispute is not resolved the parties must bring the matter to the attention of the Board through the formal dispute resolution process set out below.

9. Employment grievance.
  - a. If the grievance is in relation to another employee:
    - i. The parties must sit down uninterrupted to discuss the dispute and seek out a mutually acceptable resolution.
    - ii. If the dispute is not resolved the parties must meet with the campus Principal.
    - iii. If the dispute is not resolved the parties must meet with the campus Principal and the Superintendent.
    - iv. If the dispute is not resolved the parties must bring the matter to the attention of the Board through the formal dispute resolution process set out below.
  - b. If the grievance is in relation to a condition of employment, the results of which could impact other employees, the grievance shall be forwarded to the current Chair of the Employee Relations Committee (ERC).
    - i. The Chair will be responsible for calling a meeting of the committee.

#### **FORMAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS**

12. The Formal Dispute Resolution Process can be initiated at any time by any current member of the Richmond Christian School community (parent or guardian of a current student, student, Society member or employee).
13. In order to initiate the Formal Dispute Resolution Process the grievance must be written down and provided to the Superintendent.
  - a. The document must contain the following information:
    - i. Who is filing the grievance;
    - ii. What other party/parties are involved in the dispute;
    - iii. A factual accounting of the event or dispute;
    - iv. An accounting of the efforts to reconcile the dispute between the parties; and
    - v. The proposed resolution requested by the griever.
14. The Superintendent is to review the written grievance and set up a meeting with the person presenting the grievance within 2-3 business days of its receipt by the Superintendent.
  - a. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure:
    - i. that the information in the grievance has been carefully considered;
    - ii. that the information contained in the grievance is confirmed;
    - iii. that the other parties involved have been correctly identified; and

- iv. that a confidential investigation will commence within a reasonable time frame.
  - b. Following this initial meeting, the Superintendent will initiate a confidential investigation of the allegation with the other identified parties.
  - c. The Superintendent and the grievor will meet to review the results of the investigation.
  - d. An additional meeting with the campus Principal, grievor and all other parties with relevant involvement may be scheduled by the Superintendent if it is determined that it would be mutually beneficial to move the grievance successfully toward resolution.
    - i. All parties must complete an Endorsement of Basic Values form prior to attending the meeting.
15. Should the dispute not be resolved after the investigation and the follow up meeting(s), each party is to complete a letter to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees. Each letter must outline:
- a. the nature of the grievance;
  - b. the party's objective;
  - c. a factual accounting of the efforts made to resolve the dispute; and
  - d. the resolution sought by the party.
    - i. Each party must attach their completed Endorsement of Basic Values form.
16. All current members of the Board of Trustees will receive copies of all letters and documents. Each current member will review the information in the strictest of confidence.
- a. A special meeting of the Board of Trustees may be called depending on the seriousness of the dispute or the item will be added to the Agenda at the next scheduled meeting of the Board.
  - b. The Board of Trustees will provide a written response to all parties, within 20 business days of its having met, setting out their decision and reasons in support of the decision.
17. Should either party in the dispute resolution process contest the decision of the Board of Trustees the matter shall be referred to the Society of Christian Schools in BC (SCSBC). Their policy and procedures for Mediation and Dispute Resolution will be adopted and honored by all participants.
- a. Mediation is a voluntary process whereby the Griever and the Respondent meet with a trained mediator to determine whether the complaint can be resolved in a mutually satisfactory manner.
    - i. Both the grievor and the other parties must freely agree to participate in the SCSBC Mediation and Dispute Resolution process.
    - ii. Settlement reached as a result of this process will be made without bias. Ideally, any settlement would be to the satisfaction of all parties.

18. At any time, the Superintendent may determine that SCSBC's involvement is preferable and may be more effective in resolving a complaint than conducting an extensive internal investigation.
  - a. This recommendation may be made to the Board of Trustees and, if endorsed, will be recommended to all parties concerned.