



Rationale

Major complaints regarding the education of students, and the health and/or safety of students and staff will be addressed in a spirit that reflects the philosophy of the Catholic Independent Schools of Prince George Diocese (CISPG). It is expected that those with a concern, when appropriate, will try to resolve the issue in a Christian manner. Most complaints can be addressed immediately by speaking directly to the person involved.

Allegations regarding student abuse and neglect see Policy 330

Allegations of Bullying and Harassment Prevention see Policy 476

Policy

Within CISPG all complaints must be dealt with in a timely manner. Each member of the community is expected to follow the procedure described below. All parties involved must maintain confidentiality with respect to all aspects of this procedure and conduct themselves with Christian charity.

1. Major Complaint against School Staff

A parent/guardian who has a concern regarding any educational issue which significantly affects the education, health, or safety of the student has the responsibility to address the concern directly with the staff member(s) with whom the concern lies before taking the concern elsewhere.

If no resolution is achieved, the complainant may submit a written formal complaint to the school principal together with any relevant written material and may request a meeting with the principal at their earliest convenience. The principal or their designate will conduct a review of the complaint as promptly as possible.

The Principal is responsible for investigating major complaints, unless the complaint has been made against him or her.

2. Major Complaint against the School Principal

A parent/guardian who has a concern regarding any decision made by the principal which significantly affects the education, health, or safety of the student has the responsibility to begin addressing the concern directly with the Principal.

If no resolution to the initial decision is achieved, the parent/guardian may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent or designate to proceed with the investigation.

3. Major complaint against a Pastor

The matter should be reported to the bishop and follow the policies of RCEC.

4. Major complaint against the Superintendent

If they have already been approached to resolve the matter without resolution, the major complaint should be directed to the Superintendent's supervisor, the Bishop.

Procedures

1. Prior to the commencement of any investigation, it must be made clear to any person who has made allegations that the nature, not the details, of any allegations will be disclosed to the party who is the subject of the allegations.
2. The investigation will clarify the issue, document relevant matters and determine what policies of the CISPG and school apply.
3. A notice of the investigation should be provided to any employee who will be a subject of an investigation. The nature, not the details, of any allegations made against any employee should be provided to the employee at the commencement of the investigation. The employee may have an advocate to support them through the process. The employee is encouraged to immediately seek legal advice.
4. Any person who has made an allegation should be interviewed and questioned concerning the allegations.
5. Where the complainant is not the individual directly involved in the incident, the investigator should interview the person who is directly involved. When the person directly involved is not an adult, permission should be sought from the parent/guardian prior to conducting an interview. The parent/guardian may be present during the interview, provided that the he or she does direct interviewee.
6. Where there are witnesses to any incident that is subject to a complaint, they should also be interviewed by the investigator. The same questions should be asked of each witness. Where there are numerous witnesses, such as in a classroom where an incident occurs, a reasonable sample of witnesses may be sufficient to provide the necessary information.
7. No leading questions should be asked, but the individual should be asked to provide full disclosure.
8. Interviews should be on an individual basis, not a group basis.
9. The investigator should take notes of any interviews conducted and should provide a copy of those notes to the person who has been interviewed and request a review of the notes by that individual. The individual who has been interviewed should also be requested to sign the notes to certify they are an accurate summary of the information provided.
10. After all information has been gathered concerning the complaint, the person who is the subject of a complaint should be provided with an opportunity to respond in writing to the allegations. If new information is provided, the investigator may be required to conduct further interviews to determine whether the new information is supported or denied by other witnesses.
11. Within seven days of the receipt of the complaint, the investigator shall inform both parties in writing of the outcome of the investigation and advise them of the appeal process. For a valid reason, an extension of the timelines mentioned in the policy, may be requested and approved in writing.

Appeal Process

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the principal, he/she may, within seven (7) days of receiving the decision of the principal, submit a written appeal to the Superintendent. The appeal should include facts and details about policy or procedures not followed. The decision of the Superintendent will not be overturned if school and/or CISPG policy and procedures were followed.
2. Upon receiving an appeal in the case of a complaint against the Principal, the Superintendent will review the documentation and then either call a meeting with the complainant and the Principal, or call for further written submissions. The decision of the principal will not be overturned if school and/or CISPG policy and procedures were followed.
3. The Superintendent shall notify the appellant and/or the principal of the decision in writing within seven (7) days of the meeting.

Appeal to the Board of Directors

1. The Board of Directors may consider an appeal of the Superintendent's decision for reasons that the Board considers valid. The Board of Directors reserves the right to resolve the issue through investigation or through the formation of an appeals committee. The appellant must prepare a written submission to the Board delivered to the Superintendent's Office no later than fourteen (14) days after the Superintendent's decision. The decision of the Superintendent will not be overturned if school and/or CISPG policy and procedures were appropriately and fairly followed.
2. If the decision of the Board of Directors is not acceptable, the appellant may request an Independent School Ombudsperson to review the appeal. The names and contact information of the current Independent School Ombudsperson shall be obtained from the Superintendent. The procedure and scope of the Independent School Ombudsperson's review shall be communicated to the appellant by the Superintendent. The outcome of the Independent School Ombudsperson's review shall be communicated to the appellant by the Superintendent.
3. The Board of Directors will communicate its final decision to all parties involved.

References: <i>Form Major Complaints 310-- Catholic Independent School Committee of BC Ombudsperson Guidelines</i>	Date: August 2023
	Revisions: