WCCS Grievance Policy

Purpose and Biblical Foundation

"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)

Westminster Catawba Christian School is committed to maintaining an environment of mutual respect, open communication, and biblical conflict resolution. This policy provides a clear process for addressing concerns while honoring the principles found in Matthew 18:15-17, which guide us to resolve conflicts directly, respectfully, and with grace.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to grievances related to:

- Classroom concerns (e.g., instruction, assignments, grading, classroom management)
- Staff interactions or conduct
- School procedures or rules
- Student discipline matters
- Safety or facility concerns

IMPORTANT: This policy does not replace, supersede, or limit mandatory reporting requirements for any legal obligations under federal, state, or local law, including but not limited to suspected child abuse, neglect, etc.

Definition of "Successful Resolution"

Within this policy, the term "Successful Resolution" does not necessarily mean achieving one's desired outcome. Instead, it refers to all parties being able to thoughtfully explain their position and/or concerns and the appropriate people at WCCS taking that into consideration.

Communication Expectations

For Parents: As outlined in the Statement of Support in the Student/Parent Handbook, all WCCS parents have committed to follow the Matthew 18 principle in resolving differences and misunderstandings, striving to resolve matters with the person(s) involved as privately and lovingly as possible, rather than spreading criticism and negativism. Parents are asked to seek resolution to any grievances they may have with grace and respect, focusing on facts rather than rumors or assumptions. The Grievance Resolution Process below provides detailed guidance for how parents should address any concerns within the WCCS community.

Social media, messaging apps, or other forms of group dialogue (public or private) are not appropriate avenues to discuss grievances involving any WCCS student, family, faculty or staff member, policy, or action. Such behavior is inconsistent with the principles of Matthew 18:15-17, can be highly damaging to the trust between WCCS and parents, and is a clear violation of both the WCCS Enrollment Pledge and the

Student/Parent Handbook. Additionally, efforts to amplify concerns by contacting the media, politicians, or other external parties are equally inappropriate.

For Staff: WCCS staff are expected to respond to parent concerns in a timely and professional manner. This includes listening carefully, seeking to understand the parent's perspective, maintaining confidentiality, and working collaboratively toward resolution while keeping appropriate administrators informed.

Grievance Resolution Process

Step 1: Direct Communication (Matthew 18:15)

Parents/guardians should first address concerns, in private, directly with the person most closely involved. For example:

- **Classroom or instructional concerns:** Contact the teacher
- **Athletic or extracurricular concerns:** Contact the coach or sponsor
- **Administrative concerns:** Contact the relevant administrator
- **Student conduct concerns:** Contact the teacher or grade-level administrator

While some minor concerns can quickly be resolved through email, parents are encouraged to schedule a phone call or in-person meeting to discuss most issues. In fairness to the process, please avoid efforts to seek resolution in passing, such as drop-off or pick-up lines, after-school events, or other informal moments when WCCS faculty cannot give your concern the attention it deserves.

In pursuit of a Successful Resolution, it's important to assume good motives, respectfully explain your concerns, and take time to understand the other perspective. Please understand some situations may require the guidance of a principal or supervisor, involve other parties who need to be heard, or are simply more complex and need time to consider

Step 2: Involve Appropriate Supervisor (Matthew 18:16)

If a Successful Resolution is not achieved from Step 1, a breakdown in communications is perceived, or direct communication is not appropriate given the nature of the concern, parents should contact the immediate supervisor:

- **Teacher concerns:** Contact the Principal
- **Coach/sponsor concerns:** Contact the Athletic Director
- **Staff concerns:** Contact the Principal or appropriate supervisor
- **Principal concerns:** Contact the Head of School

If Step 2 is necessary, please submit your concern in writing to the appropriate supervisor. Include a summary of your Step 1 efforts, along with specific details such as dates, individuals involved, and your perspective of what a Successful Resolution would entail. This information is important to help the supervisor understand the full picture before moving forward.

Step 3: Administrative Review (Matthew 18:17)

If a Successful Resolution is still not achieved from Step 2, parents may request a review by the Head of School. (In matters involving the Head of School, grievances can be directed to the Board Chair.) At this step, please submit a formal written grievance to the Head of School that includes a detailed description

of your concern, documentation of your previous efforts in Steps 1 and 2, and your perspective of what a Successful Resolution would entail. The Head of School will carefully review all information and may choose to meet with relevant parties.

Important note: In every case, the Head of School's decisions are final and represent the conclusion to the grievance process.

Step 4: Board Appeal (Limited to "For Cause" Grievance with the Head of School)

The WCCS Board of Trustees is a policy governance board. In practical terms, this means the Board has one employee, the Head of School, who is ultimately responsible for all operations of WCCS. The Board establishes policies that define what the Head of School can and cannot do and then trusts the Head to operate biblically within those limits.

Because WCCS' policy governance Board is not involved with the day-to-day functions of the school, appeals to the Board of Trustees are reserved for "For Cause" grievances, defined as credible concerns that the Head of School has personally:

- acted in a manner that violates a written policy of the WCCS Board of Trustees;
- acted in a manner inconsistent with the WCCS Statement of Faith or the school's biblical commitments;
- engaged in conduct that constitutes a serious breach of professional or ethical responsibility; or
- failed to address, through the standard grievance process, a matter that falls within his or her direct responsibility, resulting in demonstrable harm to a student or family.

A "For Cause" grievance does not include disagreements with disciplinary outcomes, routine operational decisions, instructional methods, or other matters that fall within the administrative discretion delegated by the Board to the Head of School.

Parents who believe they have a "For Cause" grievance with the Head of School should submit a written grievance to the Board Chair that includes a description of the concern and detailed documentation of their previous efforts in Steps 1 through 3. The Board Chair will determine whether a grievance meets the "For Cause" standard before it is considered for Board review.

Appeals which, in the Board Chair's opinion, meet the criteria for the Board's consideration will be placed on the agenda for a regularly scheduled meeting. Note: There may be months throughout the year when the full Board is not scheduled to meet. All Board decisions are final.

General Principles

Confidentiality: All parties should maintain confidentiality throughout the grievance process, sharing information only with those directly involved in resolution.

No Retaliation: The school prohibits retaliation against any person who raises a concern in good faith or participates in the grievance process.

Good Faith: All parties are expected to engage in the process honestly and with a sincere desire for resolution.

Order of Steps: The Grievance Resolution Process works best when each step is followed in sequence. Skipping ahead often delays resolution rather than speeding it up.

Respect: All communication should be respectful in tone and content. The school reserves the right to pause the grievance process if communication becomes hostile or threatening.

Documentation: Parties are encouraged to keep records of meetings, communications, and outcomes at each step.

Special Circumstances

Urgent Safety Concerns: Matters involving immediate safety must be reported directly to the Principal or Head of School, without following the standard progression of steps outlined above.

Legal Matters: Grievances involving suspected child abuse, discrimination, harassment, or other legal matters will be handled according to applicable laws and may involve outside authorities.

Anonymous Complaints: While the school will consider anonymous reports of serious concerns, full investigation and resolution typically require identification of the complainant.

Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed periodically and amended, as needed, to serve our school community effectively while maintaining our biblical commitments.