



Complaints & Concerns Management Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This policy applies to all divisions of Sudbury Christian Academy (SCA), including its Early Learning Centre (ELC), its elementary (JK-8) division, and its secondary (9-12) division.
- 1.2. Sudbury Christian Academy endeavors to provide a safe, loving, collaborative, learning continuum for children that is enriched with Christian values and that instills a positive Christian worldview. Occasionally, complaints or concerns may be brought to the attention of the Head of Schools by a student, parent, staff member, volunteer, or professional community partner either verbally or in writing. This policy and procedure outlines the process to manage these complaints and concerns promptly and effectively.
- 1.3. Response procedures for complaints are separate from the Child Abuse Reporting Protocol and the Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures.
- 1.4. Complaints & Concerns Management Policy is a policy of the Board of Directors and will be reviewed annually and revised, if necessary, by the Board.
- 1.5. The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the Academy and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.
- 1.6. Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.
- 1.7. All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Academy management and will be addressed. Every effort will be

made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

- 1.8. Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.
- 1.9. Expectations and perceptions may, at times, come into conflict. We believe that the Bible provides a foundation and map for healthy conflict resolution which everyone is expected to follow. SCA strives to model Christ like behaviors when dealing with conflict. As Christians, we must carefully consider the admonition to make every effort to live in peace and harmony with each other (Romans 12:18 and Hebrews 12:14).
- 1.10. However, conflicts do arise and it is for this reason that it is essential that we know how to handle conflict within our school community. God provides guiding principles in Matthew 18:16-17 says, "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." Most interpersonal conflicts can be avoided or settled if both parties abide by this principle.
- 1.11. Thoughtful and prayerful consideration must precede any steps toward conflict resolution. This policy is designed to guide our school community in resolving conflict with a biblical foundation and a God-centered approach to living together in love.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 2.1. Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities, or Children's Aid Society).

3. CONDUCT

- 3.1. The Academy maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication, and role-modeling for children. Gossip, bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

3.2. If at any point a student, parent/guardian, or staff member feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused, or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to their supervisor, to the HOS, and/or to the licensee/board as appropriate (see also section 7).

4. CONCERNS ABOUT THE SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF A CHILD

4.1. Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

4.2. If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children’s Aid Society_(CAS) directly.

4.3. Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the “Duty to Report” requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

4.4. For more information, visit <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

5. PROCEDURE CHART

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<p>Program Room-Related</p> <p>E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the classroom staff directly</p> <p>or</p> <p>the supervisor or licensee.</p>	<p>Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised</p> <p>or</p> <p>arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within three business days.</p> <p>Document the issues/concerns in</p>

		<p>detail. Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the date and time the issue/concern was received; • the name of the person who received the issue/concern; • the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; • the details of the issue/concern; and • any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral. <p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p> <p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within three business days or</p>
<p>General, Centre or Operations / Related</p> <p>E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the supervisor or licensee.</p>	
<p>Staff, Duty parent- Supervisor- and/or Licensee-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the individual directly</p> <p>or</p> <p>the supervisor or licensee.</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	

<p>Student- / Volunteer-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student</p> <p>or</p> <p>the supervisor and/or licensee.</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p> <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>
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6. TYPE OF COMPLAINTS OR CONCERNS

6.1. Complaints may include but are not limited to

- 6.1.1. An act by staff or a volunteer which may be perceived as negatively affecting the child's emotional, social, physical, or intellectual well-being while at the Academy
- 6.1.2. The quality of service delivery
- 6.1.3. Contravention of current policy or a potential unreported serious occurrence
- 6.1.4. Financial mishandling
- 6.1.5. Staff bullying -- including gossip, verbal, mental, or physical abuse of other staff members, parents, or students
- 6.1.6. Any act that would bring the SCA into a negative community regard

7. RESPONSE PROCEDURE

- 7.1. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.
- 7.2. All complaints will be brought forward to the Head of Schools (HOS) unless the HOS is involved in the complaint itself. If a complaint is brought forward about the HOS the complaint will be submitted to the SCS Inc. Board Chair verbally and/or in writing.
 - 7.2.1. A student, parent, staff member, volunteer, or member of the public may bring forth a complaint at any time to the Head of Schools. If a complaint is brought forth to a teacher or supervisor or other staff member they will forward the complaint to the Head of Schools verbally and provide the written complaint if so documented.
 - 7.2.2. When a complaint or concern is brought to the attention of the Head of Schools, the following procedure will take place:
 - 7.2.2.1. Listen to the concerns of the complainant
 - 7.2.2.2. Document all the details that are discussed
 - 7.2.2.3. Respond in writing within 2 working days to the complainant that the complaint was received from them, outlining again the complaint as understood by the HOS, and stating that the complaint will be investigated.
 - 7.2.2.4. Investigate the complaint or concern within 5 working days by speaking with the person the complaint is about, if deemed appropriate, and interview any witnesses involved and any other investigative actions deemed appropriate
 - 7.2.2.5. Determine if the complaint has merit, and take appropriate action.
 - 7.2.2.6. Follow up with the complainant, in writing within 7 working days after receiving the complaint, identifying that the complaint has been investigated. A description of the outcome is not necessarily required on the written follow-up to the complainant.
 - 7.2.2.7. A copy of the complaint, all follow-up documentation and resolution shall be retained in a separate complaints file by the HOS.
 - 7.2.2.8. The Head of Schools will notify the Board of Directors of all written and significant complaints, along with outcomes

achieved in the written monthly report to the board of directors.

8. COMPLAINT RELATING EMPLOYEES / VOLUNTEERS

- 8.1. If there are any concerns or complaints regarding an educator or volunteer's behavior or treatment of a child, the Response Procedure (item 6, outlined above) will be followed. The nature of the complaint or concern will always be documented in detail. The documentation will be filed in the educator's or volunteer's personnel file if it is found to have merit.
- 8.2. The Academy has strict Behavior Guidance Policies regarding the accepted treatment of children. Any educator or volunteer contravening this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including, termination of employment.
- 8.3. Further monitoring of the complaint, or concern and or any action that is required, will be documented and recommendations will be determined by the Head of Schools as necessary.

9. COMPLAINT REGARDING A STUDENT

- 9.1. If a complaint on bullying or other such behaviours is found to have merit, the HOS will meet with the student and parent to discuss the complaint and disciplinary action including suspension or expelling the student. The documentation will stay on the student's file permanently.
- 9.2. The HOS will compile an annual complaints report outlining all complaints throughout the school year, without personal identifiers. This report will be submitted to the Board of Directors annually which will identify trends and subsequent actions taken by the HOS to reduce complaints.

10. THE ROLE OF SCS INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- 10.1. Upon receipt of a complaint related to the HOS, the Board Chair will follow up in writing to the complainant acknowledging the receipt of the complaint within two (2) working days.
- 10.2. Should the Board Chair receive a complaint that should be handled by the HOS the Chair will advise the complainant that the complaint will be forwarded to the HOS for follow up.
- 10.3. The Board Chair along with other Board members, as deemed appropriate by the Chair, will investigate the legitimacy of the complaint and follow up

on the complaint with the HOS within five (5) working days of receiving the complaint. The Board will review the findings and determine what actions are required.

10.4. Within 7 working days the Board Chair will advise the complainant in writing that the complaint has been investigated. There is no requirement to detail the findings or any discipline in the correspondence.

10.5. The Board will review the HOS monthly complaint report during the regular board meetings, identifying any trends, and discussing actions that may be required.

11. ESCALATION OF ISSUES OR CONCERNS

11.1. Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern in writing directly to the Board of Directors as a formal appeal.

11.2. Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

11.3. Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

12. CONTACTS

12.1. Luke Morse, Head of Schools, Sudbury Christian Academy (SCA), Office: 705-522-1649; luke.morse@scacademy.ca

12.2. Jody Pilon, Board Chair, Sudbury Christian Schools, Inc., Email: jody.pilon@scacademy.ca

13. GLOSSARY

13.1. *Licensee*: The individual or corporation named on the licence issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care centre.

13.2. *Staff (Employee)*: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

13.3. *Student*: Individual who is enrolled in an education program/school and is completing a placement.

- 13.4. *Volunteer*: An individual who participates in the child care program and interacts with children in care but is not paid by the licensee (e.g. parents assisting on an occasional or recurring basis with child care programming, such as excursions, field trips, etc.).
 - 13.5. *Children's Aid Society (CAS)*: A local agency with the exclusive mandate, under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, 2017 to investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect and to deliver child protection services.
 - 13.6. *Interact*: To be or become involved in communication, social activity or work with somebody else or one another (Source: Encarta Dictionary). Examples of interactions with children include conversing, playing, directing, intervening, supervising or assisting in fulfilling their needs (e.g. food/drink consumption, toilet use).
14. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS: ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15 PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS 45
- 14.1. 45.1 Every licensee shall ensure that there are written policies and procedures that set out how parents' issues and concerns will be addressed, including details regarding,
 - 14.1.1. (a) the steps for parents to follow when they have an issue or concern to bring forward to the licensee;
 - 14.1.2. (b) the steps to be followed by a licensee and its employees in responding to an issue or concern brought forward by a parent; and
 - 14.1.3. (c) when an initial response to the issue or concern will be provided. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 31.

14.2. Parent handbook

45. (1) Every licensee shall have a parent handbook for each child care centre or home child care agency it operates which shall include,

(a.2) a copy of the licensee's policies and procedures required under section 45.1 regarding how parents' issues and concerns will be addressed;

This provision is intended to provide licensees and parents with a clear and transparent procedure to follow when a parent has brought forward an issue or concern they wish to have addressed by the licensee.

Sudbury Christian Academy

Date Policy and Procedures Established: 26 June 2020

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: 1 January 2023