

# What to do when there is a disagreement...

## Grievance Policy

Mountain District Christian School is committed to forming and maintaining harmonious and cooperative working relationships at all levels. Where there is disagreement or where relationships break down, we will firstly look to the Scriptural principles for resolution.

In any potential conflict situation, it is essential that the resolution process begin as soon as the situation has been identified. The longer situations are left, the harder it becomes to reach a mutually satisfactory conclusion.

The grievance and dispute resolution process is a four step process that looks to provide a mechanism for resolving grievances between two or parties. It is intended that one of these parties be the school. The process is based on Biblical precepts.

An overview of the process. Greater detail can be found overleaf.

### ***Step one: Informal Discussions***

When differences first occur, reconciliation is sought through private and informal steps involving the parties concerned.

### ***Step two: Facilitated Discussion***

When a difference occurs but reconciliation is not attained through private and informal steps a facilitator may be sought to assist in bringing about a resolution.

### ***Step three: Formal Discussion***

Where a mutually satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached through the discussions in Step One or Two, formal discussions and / or counselling takes place. Where a mediator is involved, that person will be independent and acceptable to both parties.

### ***Step four: Formal Mediation***

An independent person, agreeable to both parties, is asked to formally mediate in the dispute and fully document points of agreement and disagreement and report to the Board.

### ***Step five: Formal Arbitration***

### ***Step one: Informal Discussions***

When differences first occur, reconciliation is sought through private and informal steps involving the parties concerned. No official record is kept of these discussions but both parties are encouraged to keep diary notes of the event with an account of the matters discussed and any agreements reached.

This step may be repeated any number of times until it becomes clear that resolution will not be reached.

The Principal (or the Board Chairman in the case of a dispute with the Principal) is to be advised if it is clear that a resolution cannot be reached. Step Two will be invoked.

### ***Step two: Facilitated Discussion***

When a difference occurs but reconciliation is not attained through private and informal steps a facilitator may be sought to assist in bringing about a resolution.

Again, no official record is kept of these discussions but both parties are urged to work with the facilitator to form an agreement. It is advisable to keep diary notes of the event with an account of the matters discussed and any agreements reached.

This step may be repeated any number of times until it becomes clear that resolution will not be reached.

### ***Step three: Formal Discussion***

Where a mutually satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached through the discussions in Step One or Two, formal discussions and / or counselling takes place. The Principal (or the Board Chairman in the case of a dispute with the Principal) is to be informed of the disagreement.

Detailed records are made of these discussions, including any commitments or undertakings given. Both parties are encouraged to sign and keep a common record of discussions.

Where a mediator is involved, that person will be independent and acceptable to both parties.

### ***Step four: Formal Mediation***

Where a dispute cannot be resolved as above, formal mediation is used in an attempt to reach a compromise position. Step Four can be invoked by the Principal, the Board, or any party to the dispute.

An independent person, agreeable to both parties, is asked to formally mediate in the dispute and fully document points of agreement and disagreement and report to the Board.

It is expected that both parties at this stage are committed to reaching a satisfactory compromise solution, and would therefore generally comply with any reasonable recommendations of the mediator.

### ***Step five: Formal Arbitration***

Where mediation has not succeeded, the final recourse is to external arbitration, through legal proceedings.