

RESOLUTION OF CONCERNS POLICY

Middletown Christian School uses Matthew 18:15-17 as a guide for the process of resolving concerns. Parental support and trust in the professional background and experience of our faculty and staff are important to us. The following guidelines have been established to manage any concerns that may arise.

First: Go directly the person with whom you have a concern and attempt to resolve the issue.

Order of Process: Parent → Teacher

Second: If the concern has been addressed directly with the other involved individual and is still unresolved, then he/she is encouraged to take the issue to the appropriate administrator (Principal).

Order of Process: Parent → Teacher → Principal

Third: In order to elevate a concern to the Board level, parents/guardians should submit their concern in writing to the Chairperson of the Board. Written concerns should be succinct, summarizing the issue at hand, the parties involved, and the desired resolution. The Board will respond in writing in a timely manner after the issue is resolved. Written responses will be considered private, and closure will be documented in confidential Board files. Except in extenuating circumstances, the Board chair will not become involved until the proper steps have been followed. School board members do not deal directly with the daily operational issues of the school and, generally, are not directly involved in most of the conflicts that arise. Therefore, board members should not be called to voice complaints or seek their influence in individual matters or conflicts.

Order of Process: Parent → Teacher → Principal → Board

We should work through the process outlined above as the appropriate means to settle conflicts. Examples of inappropriate responses to conflicts include: involving individuals who are not directly a part of the problem in discussions of the matter, soliciting public support for a private matter, demeaning others (verbally or in writing), or attempting to circumvent protocol by going around proper channels to a higher authority.

The school will endeavor to work through the grievance process to resolve parental concerns. It will exert every effort to address grievances. However, retention or re-enrollment may be denied to a student if the behavior of a parent/guardian is disruptive or injurious to the school or its reputation. The school also reserves the right to dismiss a student when, in the opinion of the school's administration and board, the student's parents/guardians have conducted themselves in a manner that is not conducive to the creation or maintenance of a constructive partnership between parents/guardians and the school.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

The basic purpose of discipline is the training of the student for self-government. At Middletown Christian School, discipline is designed to be redemptive, remedial, and corrective. Each student is expected to respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and staff. Students shall exercise their rights responsibly in compliance with Board Policy. Students who violate the rights of others or who violate school rules shall be subject to disciplinary actions outlined under *Disciplinary Infractions*

In matters of disciplinary actions involving probations, suspensions, or expulsion, parents have the right of appeal to be brought to the school board through the board chair.

*All meetings will be terminated immediately until further notice if discussion results in irate conduct, bullying, shouting or other behaviors not in harmony with the school's philosophy.

DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Student Conduct

Students are always expected to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner, showing respect for God, leadership, the school, others and themselves. The following procedures are to be exercised:

1. Students should maintain order in the halls
2. Students should walk to the right in the school building
3. The students should exercise care in the use of all school property: books, chairs, furniture, etc.
4. At all times, the students are to practice the principles of Christian morals, ethics, fair play, and courtesy in all school relationships. **THERE WILL BE NO PROFANITY OR QUESTIONABLE CONVERSATION ALLOWED**
5. The school telephone is a business phone. Students are not allowed to make telephone calls without permission. Students may not receive telephone calls during the day, except for emergencies. **A forgotten lunch or assignment is not considered an emergency.** Parents should make arrangements for lunch and transportation before school.
6. Remove all hats, coats, unapproved jackets and outerwear when you enter the building.
7. Hair should be neat. No hair combing or personal grooming should occur in the classroom or hallway.

Student Discipline Code

The following code will be reviewed with all students on an annual basis and is designed to foster and maintain a secure, non-threatening, and orderly learning environment.

The code applies to general and specific sanctions against actions or behavior that include but are not limited to:

- Illegal activities
- Disruptions to the academic process
- An abridgment of the rights of others
- Dangerous and unhealthy actions
- Insubordinate actions
- Contrary actions to other laws, board policies, and/or procedures
- Destructive activities that may jeopardize safety

Selling or peddling any items to anyone in the school organization may result in suspension or immediate expulsion.

Destruction of School Property

Destruction to school property will be assessed and parents are expected to pay costs for repair, restoration, or replacement.

Illegal Activities

It is the responsibility of the Middletown Christian School Board to report all illegal activities to the appropriate law enforcement agencies. Every effort will be made to handle all infractions with Christian grace and redemptive measures.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones are only to be used at discretion of the classroom teacher(s) during school instructional hours.

Student's use of two-way communication devices (such as cell phone) is not permitted in grades K – 4. Grades 5 – 8 must NOT use the device to communicate with other students or for any other purposes (text messaging, checking for messages, as a camera, etc.) It must be **turned off** during school hours and should be stored in backpacks unless otherwise indicated by teacher or administrator. Any student found violating this policy shall be disciplined as follows:

1. Immediate confiscation of the involved device(s) as appropriate. They will receive a major infraction. The parents must come in to pick up the device.
2. The second violation of the policy will result in a serious infraction and will result in a parent/student/administrator conference that may result in suspension.

The school does not assume any responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged communication devices.

Corporal Punishment

In accordance with the policies of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, no faculty or staff members at the school will administer any form of corporal punishment. Parents and / or guardians are not permitted to administer corporal punishment on school property.

Harassment

Students are expected to treat each other and adults with respect. Any accusation of harassment (sexual, ethnic, racial, physical impairment) or any physical verbal or written / published abuse will be vigorously investigated and disciplinary action may be taken up to and including expulsion. (Matthew 12:34)

Students who feel they are being harassed/bullied must report this to a teacher or other who is in authority. Bullying will not be tolerated and is considered a harassment violation. Cyber-bullying or any verbal or published threats (written on paper, text messages, distributed through computer, or any other electronic device), or published slander or libel about another person (student, teacher, and/or school) will result in disciplinary action that may lead to and include expulsion.

Enforcement Strategies and Procedures

The principal and/or teacher and/or staff personnel of the school are responsible for the implementation of strategies and procedures for the maintenance and enforcement of the School Conduct and Discipline Policy whenever students are on school premises. The Principal and/or teacher and/or staff personnel are also responsible for informing all parents and legal guardians of the School Discipline Policy.

The principal, teachers, administrative assistant, and support staff will serve as primary contact with students in maintaining and enforcing the School Conduct and Discipline Policy.

SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE REFERRAL FLOWCHART

All classroom teachers implement a classroom discipline plan.
Classroom procedures and routines are consistently modeled and practiced.

Minor Infractions

- Inappropriate language (cursing)
- Physical contact (minor pushing, horseplay)
- Non-compliance
- Dress code violation
- Minor class disruption (excessive talking)
- Lying/cheating
- Inappropriate use of school property or materials (computer misuse)
- Cell phone violation

Teacher handles behavior infraction

- Student conference
- Contact parent
- Time out in another classroom
- Student behavior plan

Major Infractions

- Abusive/ Inappropriate language toward a staff member
- Fighting
- Major disrespect/ insubordination
- Major classroom disruption/Tantrums Major verbal altercation
- Theft

Discipline referral

- Required parent conference
- Out of school suspension or In-School Suspension
- In-class behavioral supports
- Loss of privileges

Serious Infractions

- Bullying/Threats /Alcohol/drugs/tobacco
- Immoral conduct
- Vandalism/Tagging
- Arson
- Weapons
- Technology violations
- Academic dishonesty
- Failure to adhere to emergency procedures
- Leaving school grounds without permission

Discipline referral

- Required parent conference
- Out of school suspension
- Expulsion

3 minor infractions = 1 major infraction

3 major infractions = 1 serious infraction

1 serious infraction = Suspension

Consequences of Serious Infraction

Serious infractions are rules which the school feels are very serious. These infractions require students to be sent to the office. Each time a student breaks a serious infraction, the parents are contacted, and a discipline form is completed. After investigation of circumstances, the principal will deal with the problem in the following manner:

1. SUSPENSION – “Zero Tolerance Policy”
2. Conference with Principal, Parents (Guardian), and Student

1 serious infraction = AUTOMATIC SUSPENSIONS “ZERO TOLERANCE” OR EXPULSION

Suspension

During a suspension, the student will not be involved in any extra-curricular activities such as athletics, field trips, etc. The length of the first suspension is one (1) to three (3) days. If a second suspension is necessary, the length will be three (3) to five (5) days. Expulsion will be given serious consideration after a second suspension. Any expulsion of students will be at the discretion of the Discipline Committee. **Any daily grades during the suspension time will be recorded as zeroes, including exams.**

Probationary Status

A student who has developed a record of disciplinary actions can be placed on a probationary status for a period of time determined by the Discipline Committee. A student on probation can be expelled if he/she does not exhibit progressive measures toward correcting the problem(s) that led to his/her probation.

Expulsion

The most serious action of the Discipline Committee is the expulsion of a student. This action can take place for one serious infraction of school regulation or a combined record of infractions and warnings. Any threat or attempt to cause bodily harm or injury to another person may result in immediate expulsion. Hazing activities and/or student-on-student violence that may result in suspension or expulsion include: “Students ganging-up on fellow students (even in play), students hitting students, students intimidating students, students verbally abusive students, students sexually harassing students, students engaged in play that has sexual connotations, students bullying students, or students doing any physical activity that inflicts hurt or discomfort to other students.” Students expelled from Middletown Christian School are subject to review by the School Board before being permitted to re-enter Middletown Christian School the following year. Such serious actions are taken with much thought, discussion, and prayer.

BULLYING POLICY

Middletown Christian School is committed to providing an environment with optimal conditions for learning and personal development. A major part of this commitment rests in the ability to maintain an environment where scholars are treated with respect and where scholars are physically and emotionally safe.

Students are expected to treat each other and adults with respect. Any accusation of harassment (sexual, ethnic, racial, physical impairment) or any physical verbal or written / published abuse will be vigorously investigated and disciplinary action may be taken up to and including expulsion.

Students who feel they are being harassed/bullied must report this to a teacher or other who is in authority. Bullying will not be tolerated and is considered a harassment violation.

Middletown Christian School seeks to be proactive in addressing issues of bullying through use of preventative measures. Throughout the school year, scholars receive age-appropriate information regarding how to recognize bullying and strategies for preventing bullying. They will also learn about positive treatment of their classmates and community members. Prevention and education rest at the core of dealing with issues of bullying; whenever possible, the school will implement evidence-based prevention programs that are designed to increase social competency, improve school climate, and eliminate harassment, intimidation and bullying in schools.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is different from the typical disagreements or arguments between friends and classmates.

What's the difference?

It's bullying if:

- The person is being hurt, harmed or humiliated with words or behavior.
- The behavior is repeated, though it can be a single incident.
- It is being done intentionally.
- The person being hurt has a hard time defending himself/herself from the behavior.
- The student(s) who are doing it have more power.*

** "Power" can include such things as being older, being physically bigger or stronger, having more social status, or when a group of students "gang up" on someone.*

TYPES OF BULLYING

Teasing- name-calling, insulting, or other behavior that would hurt others' feelings or make them feel bad about themselves

Physical Bullying- pushing, slapping, grabbing, flicking, poking, pinching, tripping, or other violations of personal space

Severe Physical Bullying- punching, kicking, and similar behavior that could result in injury to others

Extortion- stole another student's money, damaged or destroyed personal property

Hazing- forced another student to do something he/she did not want to do or threatening person to maintain silence

Verbal/Written Threats of Serious Violence- threats of using a weapon, or other conduct which should be immediately reported to the police

Harassment- racial, ethnic, or sexual name-calling or other severe harassment

Gesture Bullying- shaking a fist at someone, threatening facial expressions, glaring or stare downs, etc

Intimidation- to make someone fearful; compel or deter them from acting, as if by threats.

Cyberbullying- sending mean text messages, posting videos, stories, or photos that ridicule someone, and spreading rumors through social networking sites

REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF BULLYING

Any scholar who believes he or she has been the target of unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation or bullying, or any other person in the school community who observes or receives notice that a scholar has or may have been the target of unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation or bullying may report incidents **verbally or in writing** to any staff member.

Step 1: Receiving Bullying Incident Reports

All staff are responsible for receiving oral and written reports. Whenever possible staff who initially receive an oral or written report of harassment, intimidation or bullying will attempt to resolve the incident immediately. If the incident is resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved, or if the incident does not meet the definition of harassment, intimidation or bullying, no further action may be necessary under this procedure.

All reports of unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation or bullying will be recorded on an **Incident Reporting Form** and submitted to the principal or designee, unless the principal or designee is the subject of the complaint, in which case the report should be sent to the School Board Chair.

Step 2: Filing a Bullying Incident Report

In order to protect a targeted scholar from retaliation, a scholar need not reveal his/her identity on an **Incident Reporting Form**. The form may be filed anonymously, confidentially, or the scholar may choose to disclose his/her identity (non-confidential). It is important to note that, individuals may file a report without revealing their identity; however, no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor based solely on an anonymous report. Possible responses to an anonymous report include enhanced monitoring of specific locations at certain times of day or increased monitoring of specific scholars or staff.

Step 3: Investigations of Unresolved, Severe, or Persistent Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

All reports of unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation or bullying will be investigated with reasonable promptness.

1. Upon receipt of the Incident Reporting Form that alleges unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation or bullying, the school will begin the investigation.
2. During the course of the investigation, the school will take reasonable measures to ensure that no further incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying occur between the complainant and the alleged aggressor. If necessary, the school will implement a safety plan for the scholar(s) involved. The plan may include changing seating arrangements for the complainant and/or the alleged aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a safe person for the complainant; altering the alleged aggressor's schedule and access to the complainant, and other measures.
3. Within two (2) school days after receiving the Incident Reporting Form, the school designee will notify the families of the scholars involved that a complaint was received and direct the families to the Middletown Christian School's Handbook policy on harassment, intimidation and bullying.

4. The investigation will include, at a minimum:
 - a. An interview with the complainant;
 - b. An interview with the alleged aggressor;
 - c. A review of any previous complaints involving either the complainant or the alleged aggressor;
and
 - d. Interviews with the other students or staff members who may have knowledge of the alleged incident.
5. The principal or designee may determine that other steps must be taken before the investigation is complete.
6. The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable, but generally no later than five (5) school days from the initial complaint or report. If more time is needed to complete an investigation, the school will provide the parent/guardian and/or the student with updates.
7. No later than two (2) school days after the investigation has been completed and submitted, the principal or designee will respond in writing or in person to the parent/guardian of the complainant and the alleged aggressor stating:
 - a. The results of the investigation;
 - b. Whether the allegations were found to be factual;
 - c. Whether there was a violation of policy; and
 - d. The process for the complainant to file an appeal if the complainant disagrees with the results.

Because of the legal requirement regarding the confidentiality of scholar records (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 1974), the principal or designee will not be able to report specific information to the targeted scholar's parent/guardian about any disciplinary action.

If the incident cannot be resolved at the school level, the principal or designee will request assistance from the Greater New York Conference Office of Education, as well as the Middletown Christian School Board Chair.

Step 4: Corrective Measures for the Aggressor

After completion of the investigation, the school will institute any corrective measures necessary. Corrective measures will be instituted as quickly as possible, but in no event more than five (5) school days after contact has been made to the families or guardians regarding the outcome of the investigation. Corrective measures that involve scholar discipline will be implemented according to the *Student Disciplinary Policy*.

If in an investigation a principal or principal's designee found that a scholar knowingly made a false allegation of harassment, intimidation or bullying, that student may be subject to corrective measures, including discipline.

