



Conflict Resolution Policy

Date Originally Adopted: 8/2/2011

Revisions: 4/30/2013

Related Documents:

Background

The intent of this document is to describe the fundamental agreements we hold as a community about how to resolve differences of opinion and the process we will use to ensure that every member of our community has an appropriate, safe and respectful forum in which to bring concerns for resolution.

As our community evolves, so too will our processes. It is not possible to describe every situation in which differences will arise, nor to prescribe the best way to handle each situation or dispute. It takes faith and trust on the part of every member of our community to participate openly in the process and, where necessary, suggest improvements to enhance either our process or its communication.

Conflict Resolution

The three steps defined below are not the only means of exploring and resolving the healthy variety of viewpoints within our community. In fact, we expect most matters to be raised and resolved through the every-day work of our teachers, staff, parents and the committees that serve them. This process should therefore be placed within the wider context of the overall governance of our school community, and only called upon where the best intentions of people to work collaboratively become stuck.

Fundamental Agreements

If this process is to be successful, there are certain agreements about the way we resolve our differences by which everyone must abide:

- We acknowledge the importance of open, constructive and direct communication for the purpose of strengthening our community;
- We believe in fostering an environment where conflicts are seen as opportunity for growth and are embraced for the creative ideas that come from it;
- We believe that differences of opinion are a fundamental source of the social dynamic within a community and must be expressed in order to be explored;
- We will operate according to the belief that truth will emerge from a process based on caring, creative, critical thinking and a willingness to respect and challenge one's own viewpoints as well as accepting the views of others;
- We seek to find solutions that always keep concern for our children in focus and which balance a willingness to be flexible with staying true to the core values of our school;

- We expect all parties to maintain the utmost discretion and confidentiality when involved in a dispute, so that all members of our community trust they can enter the process with respect;
- We respect the importance of time, patience and due process in achieving lasting resolutions; and
- We believe that disputes can only be resolved when there is a genuine desire and effort on the part of everyone involved to understand the various viewpoints and a commitment to work through the differences that underlie our disagreements.

Three-Step Process for Resolving Differences:

Step 1: Direct Resolution:

All members of our community are expected to strive to resolve differences through respectful dialogue and an honest exchange of the relevant facts and viewpoints between the people directly involved in the matter and within the framework of the normal day-to-day operation of the school.

Further steps in the process are built upon the foundation of this initial conversation or series of conversations.

Step 2: Administrative Resolution:

If the matter is not resolved through Direct Resolution, an Administrative Resolution may be requested. All requests for Step 2 meetings must be in writing, and will describe as clearly and simply as possible relevant background to the dispute, including efforts already taken to resolve the matter. Forms are available from the office to guide in the preparation of the written request.

The matter will be referred to the school administration, who will facilitate a meeting, which will involve the person(s) requesting the meeting, the individual(s) with whom the person has concerns, and depending on the nature of the concern and based on the judgment of the administration, any other necessary parties.

If the alleged conduct at issue involves the health or safety of students or employees, then the employee against whom the complaint is made may be put on administrative leave pending the investigation.

Step 3: Grievance Committee Resolution

This consists of the submission of a written complaint or grievance to the School Director, a temporary Grievance Committee may be formed to assist in investigation and resolution of the conflict or grievance. When the School Director forms the Grievance Committee, consideration will be given for the best composition to provide impartial resolution.

Members of the Committee may include staff members, teachers, administrators, parents, and/or outside mediators, depending on who is involved in the conflict or grievance. If the grievance involves the School Director, the Governing Board President will be responsible for arranging an appropriate Grievance Committee, or has the option of handling the resolution directly.

Where a matter is referred to Step 3, the request for the Step 3 meeting must outline the reasons why the previous steps were not considered successful and the additional input required to achieve resolution.

Step 4: Formal Resolution:

If the matter is not resolved through steps 1-3, a Formal Resolution may be requested. All requests for Formal Resolution meetings must be in writing, and will describe as clearly and simply as possible relevant background to the dispute, including efforts already taken to resolve the matter, why previous steps were not considered successful and the additional input required to achieve resolution.. Prior documentation will be forwarded to the Governing Board.

The Governing Board addresses all requests for Formal Resolutions. The GB will receive the written request and may request supplemental information if necessary. The resolution reached by the GB will be final.

It is our strong hope that we will be able to resolve all issues within these steps.

Our process is aimed at reaching a respectful conclusion that allows all parties to support the final decision, even where it may not be possible to reach complete agreement on all matters.

Communication & Documentation:

In the case Steps 2-4:

- A written acknowledgement will be sent to the person requesting the meeting within 7 working days. Every effort will be made to bring people together for the meeting within two weeks of receiving the request (sooner if possible).
- Minutes will be taken at all Steps 2-3 meetings and copies of the minutes will be provided to all people present at the meetings. The parties will be asked to sign a copy of the minutes to indicate that they are a true reflection of the conversation.
- Approved Board Minutes regarding Step 4 resolutions will be provided to the parties.
- Copies of the minutes from all meetings will be filed with the school administration.

Action Plan:

We believe that improvements in the way we do things at KPPCS can only come about if we follow through on the commitments we make during the meetings to resolve differences. The meeting facilitator is responsible for documenting an action plan from the meeting (this may be part of the minutes) and noting the names of responsible parties for following through on issues, plans & strategies that arise from the meetings, as well as deadlines and a date for a closure meeting. These action plans (if different from the minutes) will be supplied to all parties. Any participant may raise a concern about follow through with the school administration if they believe these agreements are not being put into action.