



Matthews Hall

Established 1918

PARENT CONCERN POLICY

Matthews Hall (the “School”) encourages the involvement of all members of its community in establishing and sustaining a safe and nurturing school environment. This Parent Concern Policy (the “Policy”) outlines the procedures for addressing educational concerns brought to the School’s attention by parents. Appropriate flexibility will be exercised in implementing these procedures to suit individual circumstances.

DEFINITIONS

Concern: a school-related problem or issue affecting a child/children, families or the community, which is perceived to require the attention of the School.

Parent: includes guardian or any caregiver with recognized responsibility for the care of the student; in this document the word *parents* includes families.

PROCEDURES

Classroom Concerns Brought to the Head of School

If a parent brings a concern to the Head of School about a classroom or teacher-related matter, the Head of School will undertake one or more of the following actions depending on the nature of the concern and its circumstances:

- (a) Refer the parent to the teacher to discuss the concern and resolve it at that level;
- (b) Gather any relevant information to determine the facts and circumstances;
- (c) Discuss the concern with the teacher and offer advice to the teacher, where advice is required to resolve the concern and inform the parent of the outcome;
- (d) Meet jointly with the teacher and the parent to discuss the concern where the Head of School determines that such a meeting is necessary;
- (e) Consult with other appropriate School leadership or external legal counsel, depending on the nature of the concern, in order to assist in reaching a resolution.

Other School Concerns Brought to the Head of School

If a parent brings a concern about a school policy, procedure, activity, event, or situation to the Head of School, he/she will undertake one or more of the following actions depending on the nature of the concern and its circumstances:

- (a) Contact the parent to discuss and attempt to resolve the concern;

- (b) Gather any relevant information to determine the facts and circumstances;
- (c) Consult with other appropriate School leadership or external legal counsel, depending on the nature of the concern, in order to assist in reaching a resolution;
- (d) Where a parent brings a concern about a policy or program matter which is beyond the scope or jurisdiction of the School to address, the Head of School will advise the parent of the appropriate person(s) to whom such a concern should be directed, and assist the parent with the referral where necessary.

Guidelines for Staff

In addressing parents' concerns, School staff will:

- (a) Foster a climate of respect and trust which focuses on working towards mutually acceptable solutions;
- (b) Ensure that every parent with a valid concern has an adequate opportunity to express the concern fully;
- (c) Encourage the parent to address the concern at the level at which the concern is related, except where circumstances warrant otherwise;
- (d) Conduct a process for addressing a concern that is seen to be fair by the parent and by all other parties directly involved in addressing the concern;
- (e) Maintain a written record of the concern(s) where necessary;
- (f) Provide the parent with timely updates, as needed, about the progress made in resolving the concern;
- (g) Adhere to the relevant procedures governed by legislation or School policy where the concern relates to such legislation or policy.

Guidelines for Parents

In bringing concerns to the School, parents will:

- (a) Present their concerns to School staff in a respectful manner which allows the opportunity for due consideration of the concern;
- (b) Allow for a reasonable timeline for addressing and resolving the concern;
- (c) Address the concern first to the staff person(s) responsible for the area to which the concern directly relates, unless circumstances warrant raising the concern with the administration;

- (d) Direct the concern about a School policy or program matter to the appropriate School leader where the concern should be addressed at those levels;
- (e) Maintain an openness to receiving the information and advice that may be offered by the School as possible resolutions to the concern;
- (f) Ensure that confidentiality is maintained concerning personal or private matters addressed by the parties.

CAVEAT: The School and its staff will make every effort to address and resolve valid concerns in a mutually agreeable way and in good faith; however, recognizing that this will not be possible in every case, the School reserves the right to dismiss any concern that is beyond the scope of reasonableness.