

## *St. Michael Catholic School Communication Policy*

### **COMMUNICATION**

St. Michael Catholic School supports open communication. As a faith community, we must be able to address differences in a caring, cooperative manner. Use the following guidelines to address concerns, offer ideas, and solve problems to ensure open, effective communication.

### **COMMUNICATION – School Policy**

Use the following guidelines to address concerns, offer ideas, and solve problems to ensure open, effective communication **regarding a particular school policy**:

Concern or idea regarding existing school policy:

- ❖ Contact principal. Discussion documented, including action steps leading to resolution, or implementation of all or parts of concern or idea.
- ❖ Concern or idea regarding school policy deemed appropriate for SAB consideration by principal:
  - Concern or idea regarding school policy brought by principal to School Advisory Board for consideration.
  - School Advisory Board discusses concern or idea, considers steps leading to resolution or implementation of all or parts of concern or idea, and follows SAB by-laws related to school policy change:
    - Possible policy change discussed at SAB meeting.
    - Consensus decision reached regarding policy change at following meeting. (SAB determines whether to recommend change to principal and pastor.)
    - Note: Pastor approval required prior to policy change.
- ❖ Concern or idea regarding school policy deemed inappropriate for SAB consideration by principal:
  - SAB Chair may be contacted. Discussion documented, including action steps leading to resolution, or implementation of all or parts of concern or idea.
  - Concern or idea deemed **appropriate**, steps noted above for SAB policy change process implemented.
  - Concern or idea deemed **inappropriate** for SAB consideration:
- ❖ Pastor may be contacted. Pastor will determine whether SAB action needed regarding the school policy concern or idea.

## **COMMUNICATION – Interpersonal**

Use the following guidelines to address concerns, offer ideas, and solve problems to ensure open, effective communication **regarding a concern or idea to share with a teacher:**

Parent concern or idea to share with teacher:

- ❖ Contact teacher. Discussion documented, including action steps leading to resolution, or implementation of all or parts of concern or idea.

Issue remains unresolved or idea not agreed upon by parent and teacher:

- ❖ Parent may request meeting with school principal. Discussion documented, including action steps leading to resolution or implementation of all or parts of concern or idea.
- ❖ Principal may arrange a meeting to include teacher and parent.
- ❖ Student/s may be involved at the principal's discretion.

Issue remains unresolved or idea not agreed upon by principal, parent and teacher:

- ❖ Pastor may be contacted. Pastor will determine whether SAB action needed regarding the concern or idea.

## COMMUNICATION (Handbook)

Grievances (problems, concerns, disagreements) may arise between students/parents and school staff. This school fosters open communication to provide for the timely resolution of such grievances. St. Michael Catholic School expects that any grievance will be handled in accordance with established policy and procedure. When problems and/or concerns are handled through rumor, email, and/or gossip, it makes it difficult for the problem to be identified and resolved and may be harmful to the individuals involved.

It is our firm belief that open, face-to-face communication is the best way to resolve problems. Therefore, St. Michael Catholic School encourages the concerned party to speak directly with the teacher or staff member as soon as they encounter a problem. Most often, an informal discussion following a concern or an event will bring resolution to the problem.

Expectations of parents:

- Please speak to the teacher or staff member of concern prior to accepting your child's version of the events. There are always two sides to an issue.
- Parents are expected to conduct themselves appropriately and to speak respectfully and with kindness and courtesy to other adults in the presence of children.
- Parents should demonstrate the behaviors expected of our students. They should stop rumors/gossip and direct others to use proper procedures to address problems or grievances.

*The following language refers to protocol when addressing the School Advisory Board.*

Suggestions and ideas may be brought to the School Advisory Board at any time. Interested parties must submit a written/typed request to the SAB Chair. Parties are encouraged to outline their problem/concern or suggestion in writing as well as the action they are requesting from the SAB. The SAB may not have the authority to act on all requests and those requests will be returned with an explanation or rationale.

Please refer to the St. Michael Catholic School Advisory Board Constitution and by-laws for policies and procedures for speaking to the board. Information is available on the school website.

Requests will be placed on the next regularly scheduled SAB meeting with available time on the agenda. Every effort will be made to hear petitioners in a timely manner. Requests must be submitted a minimum of two weeks prior to the next regularly scheduled SAB meeting to be considered.

Petitioners will be provided with a brief opportunity to present their concern/idea. The board may briefly discuss with petitioner during the allotted time. The SAB will not act on the request until the following regularly scheduled SAB meeting.

*The following language reflects the process for resolving grievances, or sharing ideas/concerns.*

St. Michael Catholic School supports open communication. As a faith community, we must be able to address differences in a caring, cooperative manner. Use the guidelines to address concerns, offer ideas, and solve problems to ensure open, effective communication:

1. For purposes of this policy, the parent/student, education staff member, or Principal seeking relief is referred to as the grievant. The person with whom the grievant has a complaint, dispute, or disagreement is referred to as the respondent.

2. If at all possible, complaints, disputes, or disagreements should be resolved by the parties involved. The grievant and the respondent shall meet to try to resolve the grievance within ten (10) business days of the grievance awareness. *At this meeting the respondent will inform the grievant who their immediate supervisor is. The respondent will also send a written summary of the meeting, as he/she experienced it, to the grievant within ten (10) business days.*

3. If the grievance is not resolved under #2, *the grievant and the respondent will send a written summary of the concerns (as each understands them) to the respondent's immediate supervisor. The respondent may use a copy of the summary mentioned in #2.* The grievant shall meet with the respondent's immediate supervisor within ten (10) business days of the meeting in #2 to attempt resolution. *The immediate supervisor will send a summary of this meeting to the grievant and the respondent within ten (10) business days. This will be done regardless of the outcome of the meeting.*

4. If the grievance is not resolved under #3, the grievant shall meet with the next level of administration within ten (10) business days of the meeting in #3 to attempt resolution. *The individual involved in this next administrative level is to obtain copies of the written summaries mentioned in # 2 and #3. This individual will prepare a written summary of this meeting, as he/she experienced it, and send a copy to the grievant and the respondent and the respondent's immediate supervisor, regardless of the outcome of the meeting.* Refer to following example:

Parent/student to teacher -- if no resolution;

Parent/student to Principal -- if no resolution;

Parent/student to Pastor -- if no resolution;

Parent/student submits grievance in writing to begin the local conciliation procedure.

Any grievance brought to the attention of the School Advisory Board (SAB) shall be referred to the Principal. A Grievance Committee shall not be formed until the above steps have been taken.

5. The request to begin the next stage of the local conciliation procedure must be made in writing to the school Principal by the person seeking relief within ten (10) business days after conferring with the Pastor.

6. A local conciliation team will be formed and made up of three persons; one designated by the Pastor; one designated by the grievant and one designated by the respondent.

7. The local conciliation committee will meet in a time period not to exceed fifteen (15) business days of being formed to receive evidence and make recommendations. The committee shall have the discretion to determine whether evidence shall be written, oral or both.

8. At the conclusion of the meeting, and upon due consideration (discussion, thought, prayer), the committee will write a summary of the meeting and make its recommendations in writing to the Principal and Pastor. The Principal and the Pastor in turn, will determine whether parish and/or school policies have been adhered to. The recommendations will then be forwarded to all concerned parties and will be kept confidentially in the school office.

9. The local conciliation procedure should be completed within twenty-five (25) business days. It is the responsibility of the person seeking relief and the respondent to follow the recommendations of the local conciliation committee.

10. If the complaint, dispute or disagreement is not resolved to the satisfaction of either party, a referral to the Archdiocesan Due Process may be made. Nothing contained herein shall obligate either party to consent to conciliation or arbitration under the Archdiocesan Due Process procedure.

A copy of the Archdiocesan Due Process policy may be obtained from the Principal.