



# Mid North Christian College

## GRIEVANCE FOR STUDENTS Policy and Procedure

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Due to the brokenness of our human nature (Jeremiah 17:9), we may at times irritate others, have misunderstandings, strong disagreements and other grievances.

At MNCC we use the principles developed by Peacewise to deal with conflict, which see conflict as an opportunity for growth.

<http://www.peacewise.org.au/get-help-with-conflict-2/peacemaking-principles>

The goal in all grievances is that there can be appropriate resolution to the conflict and restoration of all relationships affected. This is in line with the MNCC Principles of Conduct.

When a grievance arises, everyone has three broad choices in how they respond:

- 1) attempt to escape the situation,
- 2) directly or indirectly attack the other person/s involved, or
- 3) try to work it out.

Trying to **escape** the situation comes in three main forms: 1) *running away*, 2) *denying* there is a problem, and 3) *blaming* someone or something. *Running away* may be necessary if you need to avoid a situation quickly to be safe. However, if no other action is taken, then nothing will change and the grievance will remain. The same is true of *denying* there is a problem. This is more about shutting out the problem, and pretending it didn't happen. Nothing will be solved. In both of these cases there is the danger that it could fester into bitterness or a personal grudge could develop. The third form of escape, *blame*, seeks to avoid resolving the matter by shifting blame to some other person or cause. If this led to misrepresenting or distorting truth, or implicating someone falsely, it could lead to consequences according to the College behaviour management policy.

Responding to a grievance through **attack** also takes three main forms: 1) *fighting* the other person/s involved – using physical force to injure; 2) *putting down* the other person/s involved – attacking others with harsh and cruel words, stirring up anger in others; or 3) *gossiping* about the situation – talking about the problem to others – not in order to bring resolution but to gain sympathy or muster supportive action which if represented in a biased manner could further incite harassment.

All three responses are a way of either directly or indirectly attacking the other parties in the conflict situation. None achieve a positive outcome and each are condemned in the Bible (e.g. Matthew 26:52, Matthew 5:21-22, Proverbs 16:28). At MNCC such actions are breaches of the College Principles of Conduct and will be dealt with according to the Behaviour Policy, the Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policy, and if necessary, the Suspension/Expulsion Policy.

When a grievance arises, the third option, and the one that MNCC actively promotes, is to **work it out**. This is the only good way to deal with conflict, but it does not come easily to many people. There are three options in the *work it out* response. Students can choose to



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overlook an offense — dealing with an offense yourself by simply deciding to forgive a wrong. This is a good choice if the grievance is only minor, or it's the first time something has happened. A second choice to work it out is to *get help* from an older student, student leader, yard duty teacher, home group teacher, etc. The role of the person approached for help is to go with the student to support them in talking it over with the person/s they have the grievance with.

The simplest and preferred choice is to directly *talk it through* with the person/s the conflict is with to try to reach a resolution. This could happen one on one, or after first discussing it with family members or a member of College Staff (e.g. chaplain, SSO, teacher). Family members or staff members should always seek to support students with the grievance to talk about it with the person they have had the conflict with.

The aim of talking with the person is that the conflict can be resolved and restoration can occur. In most situations, there is likely to be some degree of fault on each side. For true restoration to occur, everyone involved should apply the “5 A’s”:

- *Admit* what you did wrong
- *Apologise* for how your choice affected the other person
- *Accept* the consequences
- *Ask* for forgiveness
- *Alter* your choice in the future.

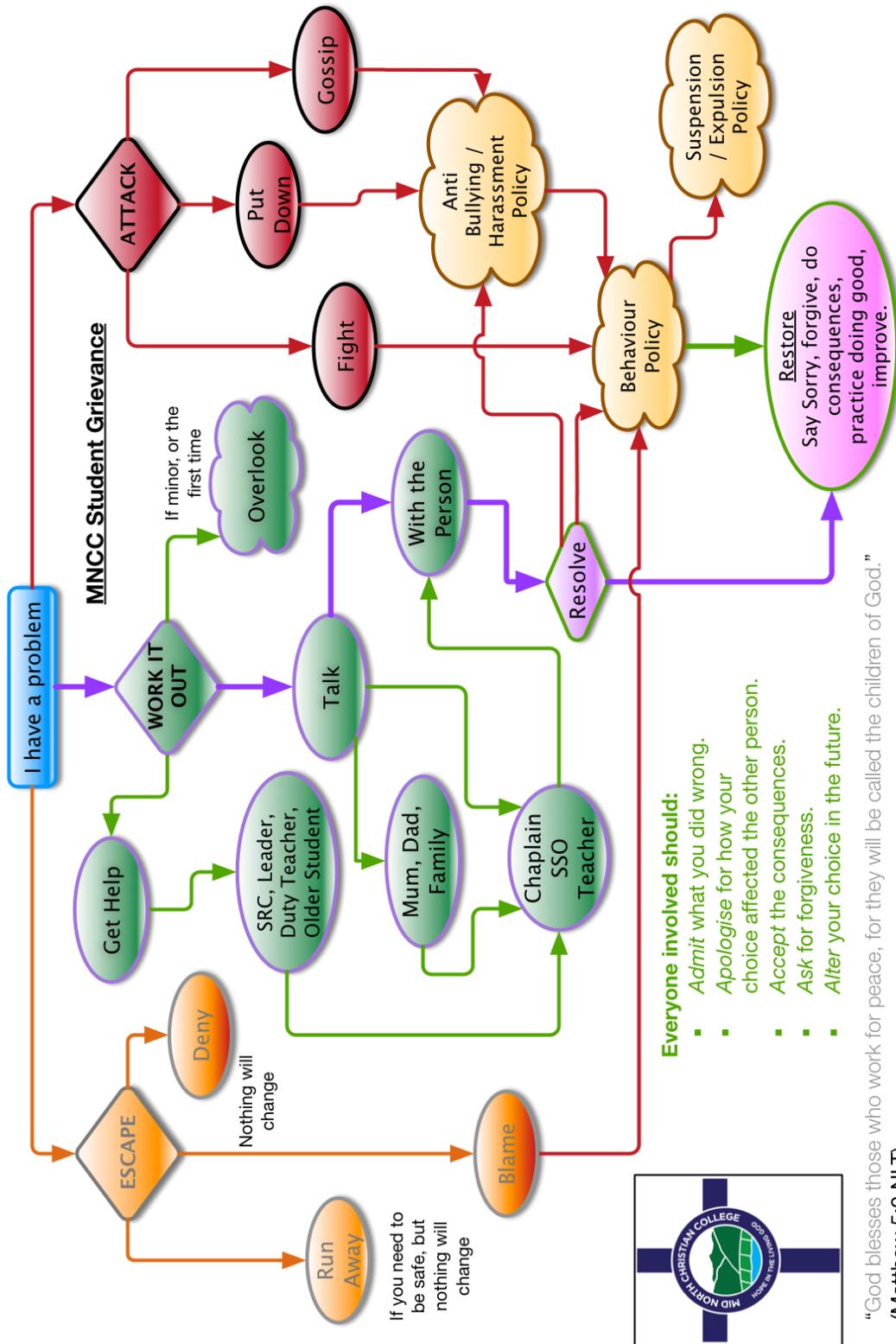
It is important to note that true forgiveness is not a feeling; it's a choice you make. Forgiveness also doesn't mean you forget about what someone did to hurt you or excuse what they did, nor does it depend on being guaranteed that someone won't do the same wrong thing again. True forgiveness is promising that you will not dwell on the wrong done, nor bring up the situation in the future, or talk about it with others. It means you will restore the friendship again and think positively about the one who wronged you and do good to them. God is the ultimate role-model of forgiveness: “*Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour. Instead, be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*” (Ephesians 4:32 NLT).

If a resolution to the situation cannot be reached by the students involved talking it over, then the matter should be taken to the relevant member of College Leadership. The Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bully/Anti-Harassment Policy may be applied as required.

If there are matters to do with staff, leadership, or other parents/volunteers, students should have their parent / guardian support them through the Grievance for Parents and Community Policy.

The possible responses and steps to working out a resolution to a problem are summarised in the colour-coded flow chart on the next page

## Flow Chart



[www.peacewise.org.au/get-help-with-conflict-2/peacemaking-principles](http://www.peacewise.org.au/get-help-with-conflict-2/peacemaking-principles)

"God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God."  
(Matthew 5:9 NLT)

