

INTRODUCTION

This school is a ministry of Wyong Baptist Church and operates within that framework as a Christian community. To operate effectively as a community, it is important that all members of the community including parents, staff, and students, understand the basis on which the community operates. As a ministry of the church the principles upon which the school operates must be grounded in biblical truth. As a community it must also be remembered that relationships are vitally important.

The policy set out below is founded upon Biblical principles which form the basis of communications within the school. Some key references include - [Matthew 18:15-35](#); [Romans 12:9-21](#); [1 Corinthians 13:1-8](#); [Ephesians 4:1](#) and [5:21](#); and [Philippians 2:1-5](#). The policy should also be understood and implemented within the context of the love for one another that should characterise a Christian community ([John 13:34-35](#)).

POLICY

Within the community of the school there is a great deal of formal and informal communication and it is not the intention of the school to restrict the relationships that are an important part of the life of the school. However Scripture warns, *"The tongue has the power of life and death"* ([Proverbs 18:21](#)). The words that we say are powerful and can cause considerable damage. In order to minimise the potential for damage to the school and the members of the school community the principles set out in [Matthew 18](#) should be followed not in a legalistic way but as a model given by Christ himself for us to follow.

Within the context of the school this might generally happen as follows:

First Principle - Talk first with the person with whom you have a problem.

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over." - Matthew 18:15

It is vital that Christians should pray about an issue before trying to resolve it, bearing in mind that we must not sin when we get angry *"In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry"* ([Ephesians 4:26-27](#)), and that we must always be ready to forgive ([Ephesians 4:32](#)) and to accept the responsibility to live at peace with others as far as it is our responsibility ([Romans 12:18](#)).

In the first instance any conflicts should be addressed informally between the two parties involved. The aim is to find out whether the problem you see is a real concern or just a problem of communication. If you then believe the other party is wrong, you should lovingly correct them and restore the relationship before it suffers any further harm. As indicated in this passage this should be done in a private manner. If, and only if, this does not result in the conflict being resolved the matter may, after prayerful consideration, be taken to the next stage.

Second Principle - If you can't resolve the problem, take a wiser person with you.

"But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." - Matthew 18:16

Prior to involving others in any disagreement, one should be mindful that to do so reduces the likelihood of the matter being resolved without some damage to the relationship with the other person. Although this may be healed over time it is wise to count the cost before embarking on this course of action.

If it is prayerfully considered that the matter needs to be taken before witnesses it is generally appropriate that this be the person most directly responsible for the person against whom the complaint is made within the authority structure of the school. If this does not result in the matter being resolved it is important to again seek the Lord to ensure that the complaint is justified as each stage will, most likely, result in further deterioration of the relationship. If the matter cannot be resolved at a lower level of the authority structure within the school, it should then be referred to the Principal. Referrals to the Principal can be made verbally (phone conversation or meeting) or in writing (letter or email).

In dealing with any issue, the Principal will firstly ensure that the preceding steps have been undertaken and that appropriate opportunities have been given for the accused to respond to

any accusations raised against them. In doing so the Principal may make available any documentation or other information pertaining to the problem. The complainant can expect a response to their concern within seven days of the Principal receiving the referral. This response will be both verbal (in the form of a meeting or phone call) and in writing.

Third Principle - Only refer matters to the Board when the prior steps have been tried.

"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church." - Matthew 18:17a

If the intervention of the Principal does not result in a resolution of the dispute the matter should then be referred to "the church". As indicated above the school operates as a ministry of Wyong Baptist Church under which the school derives its authority. The church has delegated this authority for the running of the school to the School Board who, in this case, would act as 'the church'.

In the event that a matter is referred to the School Board, this should be done in writing (either in the form of a letter or email) and addressed to the Board Chair. This written communication will be dealt with at the next board meeting (board meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of the month, although this can vary on occasion). Should the Board Chair believe a resolution/response is required earlier than this, an extraordinary board meeting to address the matter may be called.

It is not appropriate for individual Board members to be approached or canvassed on any issue as proceedings of the School Board are confidential and not discussed publicly. Any Board member who is approached directly with a complaint will not enter into discussion on the subject but will merely request that the matter be addressed through the appropriate channels as outlined in this policy.

In reaching a decision on any matters before it, the School Board must consider all the available information and act in the best interest of the school as a whole. This may result in decisions being made for reasons that cannot be fully explained because of the need to maintain confidentiality. While it is intended that a response will generally be made to matters raised with the School Board this will not usually include details of any discussion and may consist only of an acknowledgment that the issue has been raised. A response will be provided to the complainant

from the Board Chair or delegate in writing within seven days of the meeting at which it was addressed.

In the event that an issue is raised with the School Board and in the view of the complainant it is not satisfactorily resolved it would be appropriate for that person to review their continuation as a member of the school community. It is not appropriate for issues to be discussed outside the framework that is discussed in this policy. In the event that this occurs the School Board may decide that, after following the procedure set out in this policy, it is in the best interests of the school that the relationship is terminated.

In the event that the grievance or complaint is against the Principal, the above principles still apply. Firstly, commit the matter to prayer and if appropriate, meet with the Principal to discuss the issue. Should a resolution not be reached, bearing in mind the aforementioned dangers associated with this action, have a third party join you when you meet. Should the matter remain unresolved it should then be taken to the School Board. This is done in writing and is addressed to the Board Chair. The Board Chair will raise the matter with the board at the next meeting or earlier if deemed appropriate and a response will be provided to the complainant from the Board Chair or delegate in writing within seven days of the meeting at which it was addressed.

Fourth Principle - Preserve unity as much as you on your part can do.

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." - Ephesians 4:2-3

You should not discuss your grievances with other people who are not directly concerned with fixing the problem as set out above. The Body of Christ, which is in effect Christ himself, is hurt when we gossip about problems or when we talk to others about issues that they do not need to know about. Often after an issue is resolved between two people the problem reoccurs because so many other people have heard about it and they did not hear how it was resolved. Christians are called to be patient, humble, forgiving and keeping unity as much as they can.

As well as the policy matters outlined above the following pages outlined the procedures associated with this policy.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

The purpose of this section of the document is to provide families with a clear understanding of the communication channels that are in place within the school in relation to the Communication & Grievance Policy. Our school is continuing to grow and with such large numbers of people involved it is vital that all are aware of communication procedures within the school.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

In most cases when parents wish to contact the school, they should contact the member of staff most involved in the matter they wish to raise (e.g., their child's class teacher for a class matter, front office for clarification of school information, the choir teacher for a choir matter, etc.). Sometimes parents have enquiries (such as clarifications, concerns, or complaints) that are appropriate to discuss with a more senior member of staff.

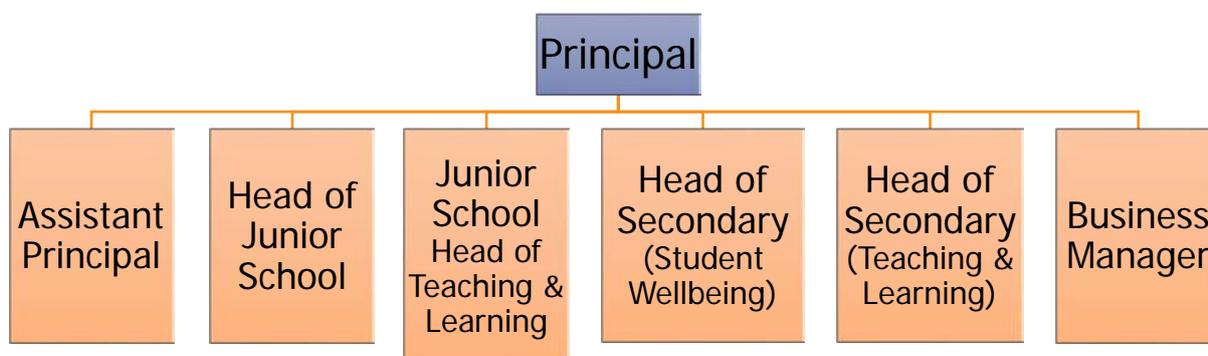


Diagram: Senior Leadership Structure at Wyong Christian Community School

The members of the Senior Leadership Team are:

Principal:	Mr Ian Liney
Assistant Principal:	Mr Darren Milligan
Business Manager:	Mr Grant Kayes
Head of Junior School:	Mr Paul Marks
Junior School Head of Teaching & Learning:	Mrs Kerrie Smithers
Head of Secondary – Teaching & Learning:	Mr Stephen Moody
Head of Secondary – Student Wellbeing:	Mrs Katie Worboys

INFORMATION NIGHTS

Meet the Teacher Evening

In early February, an information evening is held to enable parents to meet their child's teacher. This is a time when parents are given general information about the class program for the year and are able to ask questions of the staff and build relationship. It is not intended to be individual parent/teacher interviews.

School Orientation

For parents with children entering the school for the first time, an Orientation Morning is held during November the preceding year, to familiarise them with school procedures. This enables the children to spend a sample time in their 'new' classroom.

Year 7 School Information Evening

All students moving from Year 6 to Year 7 are requested to attend an information evening (during Term 3) with their parents, to help them become familiar with the procedures for the coming year.

Subjects/Electives Selection (Year 9 and Year 11)

From time to time, you and your child may be required to make decisions about which subjects to study in subsequent years. Information sessions are held at appropriate times during the year (usually early Term 3) to explain the subject selection process, the subjects on offer and best practice for decision making. Again, we would strongly encourage your attendance at this evening to be well informed for your child's schooling.

Other Information Evenings

These may occur throughout the year depending on the nature of the events scheduled. Things that will likely have information evenings could include:

- Year 9 Red Centre Road Trip (aka Northern Territory Experience)
- Year 8 Hike / Activity Day
- Year 10 Work Experience
- Duke of Edinburgh Program

SCHOOL NEWSLETTERS

Lighthouse News

This is an important method of school/parent communication. Information regarding any forthcoming events and student information will be communicated through the School Newsletter. The school newsletter is distributed fortnightly via our electronic media – website, school app and email.

Fortnightly Focus

Every grade in Junior School sends an email home to parents with a link to their child's Fortnightly Focus webpage within CANVAS. This page is designed to keep parents informed about news specifically related to their child's class. Parents are welcome to phone the school office any time during the day to arrange to meet with our staff to discuss any issues of concern or to share stories to encourage.

SCHOOL WEBSITE

The school is continuing to develop its website as an important communication tool within the school community as well as a window of WCCS to a wider audience. Parents are encouraged to regularly visit the website www.wyongccs.nsw.edu.au for information on school events and programs, access to regular publications and key school documents. We trust that over time, not only will you find the immediacy of this access helpful but that together we will contribute to a reduction in paper usage.

SCHOOL APP

The Wyong Christian Community School App is a free and available to families to aid communication between home and school. It provides families with access to the school calendar, newsletters, staff contacts and the school website. Notices are also posted on the app and parents can communicate any student absenteeism via the app. The app also has links with the school Facebook page and Twitter account.

FACEBOOK & TWITTER

Wyong Christian Community School has both a Facebook page and Twitter account through which it also communicates with school families. Notifications regarding calendar events or updates such as return times from excursions are all posted on these social media platforms.

PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Formal Parent/Teacher Interviews will be held once each semester. School reports will be sent out at the end of Terms 2 and 4. Mid-semester interviews are designed to enable regular discussion of your child's progress. Parent/Teacher Interview nights are not the only times that teachers are available to discuss your child's progress. All teaching staff are willing to meet with parents at mutually convenient times throughout the year to discuss progress and any issues of concern.

MAKING APPOINTMENTS

Where parents have an enquiry (such as a clarification, a concern, or a complaint) that they wish to discuss with a member of staff, it is always preferable to make an appointment time in advance to ensure the staff member's availability. These can be made via the school office. Please note that parents should avoid ringing teachers during class times as teachers are not able to leave their classes.

WHERE TO DIRECT NON-TEACHING ENQUIRIES

- **General enquiries & clarification of newsletter entries:** Contact the Administration Staff.
- **Appointments to see the Principal:** Contact the Principal's Personal Assistant, Mrs Janine Hellyer.
- **Fee payments:** Contact the Accounts Manager, Mrs Julie Barlow, or the Business Manager, Mr Grant Kayes.
- **Difficulties with fee payments or applications for Fee Subsidies:** Contact the Business Manager, Mr Grant Kayes.
- **Enrolment enquiries:** Contact the Registrar, Mrs Alison Atherton.

WHERE TO DIRECT TEACHING ENQUIRIES (CLARIFICATIONS, CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS)

- **Class matters:** If you have enquiries concerning your child's welfare, academic progress, homework, friendships, etc.:
 - a) For Junior students: In the first instance contact your child's class teacher.
 - b) For Secondary students: If you have an enquiry about your child's general progress, contact your child's Home Room Teacher. If you have an enquiry about your child's progress in a particular subject, contact your child's teacher for that subject.

- **Curriculum matters:** If you have any enquiries about the school's academic program, you should contact either the Heads of Junior School or the Head of Secondary - Teaching and Learning. Enquiries directed to these staff members would generally be broader than enquiries directed to a class teacher. These may include:
 - a) Clarification of school policy in Key Learning Areas.
 - b) The provision of support for students with special needs.
 - c) Related curriculum matters such as student placements in class groupings (e.g., for primary maths, secondary elective classes), use of textbooks, involvement in academic competitions and benchmark testing, etc.
- **Student welfare & administration matters:** If you have any enquiries concerning student welfare or school administrative matters, you should contact the Heads of Junior School, Head of Secondary School - Student Welfare, or the Assistant Principal. Issues could relate to student attendance & punctuality, behavioural management & disciplinary issues, playground issues, bus issues, uniform issues, referrals to the school counsellor, issues relating to the school timetable or calendar, and issues relating to school events.
- **Development Issues:** If you have any clarifications, concerns, complaints, or suggestions concerning the development of the school as a centre of Christian education you should contact the Principal. Issues could relate to spiritual development of students, performance and development of staff, development of the school curriculum, development of school policies, development of the school, future directions, and development of home/school relationships.
- **Concerns with other children:** Where parents have concerns with the way their child is being treated by other children or other parents it is always preferable for a parent to contact the school rather than for the parent to approach another child or parent directly (i.e., class teacher if a class matter, Assistant Principal if a broader problem, Principal if an even more complicated problem). The relative objectivity of school staff can often promote the resolution of a problem in a more efficient manner than is possible under the alternative subjective situation.

Acknowledgement is made to the former Christian Community Schools Limited for their contribution to the development of this policy.