

**Delmarva Christian Schools**  
**Matthew 18**  
**Summer 2017**

**The Reality of Conflict**

Delmarva Christian Schools seeks to do all things from the foundation of God's Word. The reality that we live in a sinful world is evident throughout all aspects of the school. Leadership, faculty and staff, students, and parents are all sinners living in a fallen world - saved by God's grace - through the blood of Christ. The effects of sin continue to impact each of our lives and the reality that conflict will exist as we challenge each other to grow in our relationship with Christ requires that we consider how we will resolve conflict within the school community.

**Foundational Truth**

The foundation of conflict resolution at Delmarva Christian is found in Matthew 18:15-17.

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

These verses establish the biblical framework for working to restore a brother or sister in Christ, who is found to be in sin, back to the body. They also establish the framework used within Delmarva Christian Schools to navigate conflict. The desire is to have honest communication, establishing trust, that leads to correction and restoration.

**All Parties**

In order to establish an environment of trust and restoration it is important that all parties have hearts of humility and a desire for unity in the body. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:1-3,

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The characteristics in this passage - humility, gentleness, patience, and love - are critical for all parties to exhibit throughout the process in order for restoration to occur and for there to be unity within the school body.

**Specific Steps**

Based on these foundational principles Delmarva Christian Schools desires that all members of the school community abide by the following guidelines when working through conflict within the school community:

1. **Pause.** Except in the case of an emergency allow at least 24 hours to pass before addressing the concern.
2. **Pray.** Prayerfully consider the situation. Pray for all parties involved. Pray for a spirit of humility, gentleness, patience, and love - for all involved. Pray for restoration of the relationship and for spiritual growth.
3. **Plan.** Setup a time to meet with the other party. Face-to-face is always best, a phone call is the other option. Email is not to be used to address an issue but may be used to setup a time to meet.
4. **Meet.** The offended party should meet and share their issue with the person who has offended them. This can be very difficult but is a critical step in the process.
5. **Mediate.** If restoration has not occurred after an initial meeting it may be time to engage a third party to help mediate the issue. School staff and pastors play an important role in supporting the process and mediating conflict within the school community.
6. **Forgive.** In it Galatians 6:1 it reads, "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted." In order for healing to occur it is important that there be forgiveness. Ultimately God forgives the sin but it is important to gently restore damaged relationships to build unity in the body.

### **When Resolution is not Achieved**

It is also important to recognize that Matthew 18 allows for disagreement and separation. Not all matters will be resolved. Often, time is needed to heal deep wounds and both parties will need to have patience when working through the process. For situations that do not result in agreement and restoration, school leadership will determine the next steps in the process which may include the parties agreeing they will remain in disagreement. It may also include one or more parties being removed from the school community.

### **Biblical Support**

The following additional Scriptures are important to consider when addressing conflict in the school:

Ephesians 4:29

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

2 Corinthians 13:11

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Hebrews 12:14-15

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Proverbs 10:12

Hatred stirs up strife,  
but love covers all offenses.

Psalms 101:5

Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy. Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart I will not endure.

Colossians 3:12-14

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.