

# Critical Issues Framework

Board Approved May 2022

## Guiding Principles

### I. Theological and Educational Foundations

The Holy Scriptures provide the basis for how LC handles controversy. Lynden Christian Schools and the Board of Directors have adopted several additional documents that guide the educational program. These resources include:

- **The Three Forms of Unity:** the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort
- **Our World Belongs to God:** A contemporary testimony that states our faith and theology
- **Constitution and By-laws:** The most fundamental statements of purpose and theology that motivated the formation of Lynden Christian Schools and govern its ongoing existence
- **Lynden Christian Schools – Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives:** This provides theological and educational presuppositions.
- **Christian Schools International Publications:** From Vision to Action and 12 Affirmations 2.0 These documents developed the basis and purposes of what Reformed Christian schools can and ought to be.

### II. LC's Mission

The mission of Lynden Christian Schools is to be an effective instrument of God. Together with Christian parents and the church, we seek to educate children and young people so they grow and mature into perceptive and caring Christians. Finally, our goal is to produce citizens who have a transforming influence in the World.

### III. Transparency and Communication Fostering Partnership

Each stakeholder appreciates being well-informed about how the school handles critical or controversial issues. School administration and staff will provide helpful resources and timely information to the community. It also remains essential for school administration and staff to stay abreast of cultural developments and the school community to be proactive with instruction and communication.

### IV. Biblical Conflict Resolution

Scripture guides Christians to respond to controversy and disagreement in ways that seek resolution, reconciliation, and unity among believers. Sin crouches at our doors during times of conflict. The following steps summarize Biblical expectations (Further explanation and scripture references are available on the school website.)

- First, prepare
  - Become spiritually focused (Galatians 6:1)
  - Look at the log in your own eye (Matthew 7:3-5)
  - Pray forgiveness and blessing (Colossians 3:13)
  - If possible, choose to overlook an offense (Proverbs 19:11)
- Then, you go quickly to the person, in person, to be reconciled. Each word of this step is essential. (Matthew 5:23-26 and 18:13-15)
- Finally, be steadfast in reconciliation
  - We respond to sin by giving and seeking forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32)
  - We respond to disagreement by pursuing understanding and peace (Ephesians 4:1-3, Romans 12:18). If disagreement remains, we choose to live peaceably without hindering our relationships.
  - We cultivate humility and love (Philippians 2:3-4, Romans 12:10-18).

## **Roles**

### **I. Teachers and Grade Level/Subject Department**

- Pray for wisdom and guidance from the Lord
- Identify/anticipate curricular topics that may be divisive or controversial and collaborate with departments and administration on how to proceed
- Identify and incorporate Biblical guidelines/principles essential to the subject and helpful to students in developing a Christian worldview
- Plan instruction, activities, and pace to minimize student misunderstanding of challenging topics in the context of a classroom where there may be tension or disagreement
- Establish essential points of common ground based on scripture and identify areas where Christians hold differing positions. Students should be given clarity on positions supported by the proper understanding and application of scripture
- Develop a parent communication/feedback plan at the beginning of the year and reinforce this at key times during the year
- Help students form healthy discussion habits in a grace-filled context – create a safe learning environment for exploring complex issues
- Follow Biblical Conflict Resolution principles when disagreements arise
- Consider using resources and ideas offered by community members where appropriate and helpful
- Adjust instruction to the developmental needs and readiness of students
- Select, in consultation with department colleagues and administration, appropriate curricular materials and resources.

### **II. Administration**

- Pray for wisdom and guidance from the Lord.

- Identify curricular topics that may be divisive or controversial
- Guide teachers and staff
  - When (if) to share personal views
  - How to help students have appropriate Biblical closure
  - How to foster respect in disagreement
  - Selecting learning materials
  - Facilitate conflict resolution training for school personnel
- Provide clarity or guidance on critical issues or situations with staff.
- Foster community communication
- Foster institutional consistency regarding the instruction of controversial issues taking into consideration the developmental levels in students
- Articulate the value of researching, understanding, and evaluating different perspectives in the educational context
- Ensure Biblical Conflict Resolution principles and school protocols are followed when complaints or concerns arise
- Research and provide parent and community resources
- Share important documents and policies with the school community
- Inform the Board about issues that arise
- Collaborate with the Board regarding the need for position statements

### **III. Parents**

- Pray for wisdom and guidance from the Lord
- Become familiar with LC's guiding educational principles and documents on the school website
- Become familiar with course information and materials shared by teachers
- Seek clarification or address questions directly and privately with the teacher or staff member directly responsible for the matter of concern
- Parents of older students should guide students in seeking clarification directly with the teacher or staff member
- Follow the steps of Biblical Conflict Resolution when there is disagreement or the need for reconciliation
- Support school policies and protocols
- Establish positive and constructive communication with school personnel
- Follow the appropriate communication steps as outlined by the administration of each school building and by board policy

### **IV. Board**

- Pray for wisdom and guidance from the Lord. Work with the superintendent to discuss and approve school positions on particular topics as needed

- Direct parents and community members to pursue clarification directly with the teacher or administrator according to building policy and Biblical Conflict Resolution
- Review Board policies to clarify appropriate channels of communication

#### **V. Churches**

- Pray for wisdom and guidance from the Lord
- Serve as a resource for positions related to theological underpinnings
- Support the school in directing and encouraging members toward Biblical resolution

#### **VI. Students**

- Pray for wisdom and guidance from the Lord
- Listen carefully to avoid misunderstanding controversial content and ask thoughtful questions to clarify misunderstanding or confusion
- Discern bias to identify reliable sources for information
- Explore multiple perspectives and affirm truth wherever it is found
- Pursue understanding through careful and empathetic listening
- Develop curiosity and seek clarification through careful questioning, research, and the guidance of Christian thinkers
- Think carefully in pursuit of Biblical truth and Godly wisdom
- Readily engage in healthy discussion, seeking clarification on points of agreement and disagreement
- Study God's Word and consider how it guides our understanding of controversial issues
- Learn to resolve conflict in a Biblical manner