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4.1 General " *In Loco Parentis* "

The teachers at school stand "in the place of the parents". They have a delegated responsibility and therefore it is very important that we maintain a close relationship between the teachers at school and parents at home. Our staff wants to maintain a close **consistency** with the home in respect to our world and life view, and therefore in matters of Christian conduct, discipline and instruction we must also strive to be **unified**. Parents may have legitimate expectations of the school but the staff may also have legitimate expectations of the parents.

4.1.1 Working out differences together in a Christian spirit

If the work of the teachers is to build upon and complement that of the parents, open and active communication is necessary. By and large we may be happy that there is a high degree of consensus between the school and our homes. However, parents must remember that their family is one of more than 120 families. Inevitably, there are going to be differences of opinion in some issues. The school cannot possibly satisfy **everyone's** wishes; there must be flexibility and a willingness to work out our disagreements. The latter is not simply an idealistic wish, but a Biblical imperative. Furthermore, teachers too, make mistakes. Therefore if parents are concerned, annoyed or even angry because of something which happened at school, please get **all** the facts first by contacting the pertinent teacher(s). Many Bible passages can be cited to show that we are **commanded by the Lord** to work out our differences first, one-to-one: (Matt. 5: 23; Matt. 18: 15; Eph. 4: 26, 27). If differences cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the principal should be involved, and then the school board, should the issue warrant such attention.

Most problems arise because of a lack of communication. There are many ways in which we keep open lines of communication with the parents. At the present, we make use of the following means to promote this communication:

- 1) **Telephone** calls are a quick and easy way to give or receive an update on a child's progress, to report a problem, to clear up a misunderstanding, or to ask a question. Teachers do appreciate it when parents initiate a call and parents should not allow any fear of wearing out their welcome to prevent or limit their use of this means of communication.
- 2) **Several progress** reports are issued throughout the school year. At the end of the second week of October, an *Interim Report* is issued to give parents an initial indication of their children's progress. At the end of each term, the last week of November, the second week of March and at the end of June, the students all receive a formal Term Report which summarizes each student's progress. After the November and March reports formal parent/teacher interviews are scheduled.
- 3) **Formal and informal interviews** keep parents and teachers aligned with respect to a child's academic progress and/or behaviour. Parents may request an interview at any time during the year.
- 4) **Parent-teacher Evenings** provide opportunities for instruction in, and discussion about topics related to Reformed Education of mutual interest and concern to staff and parents.
- 5) Articles in *John Calvin School Eagle* provide parents with information about the activities of the school.
- 6) At the beginning of every school week all the teachers contribute to the *Eaglet* which the oldest child in each family brings home. The *Eaglet* will also provide weekly up-dates on events in the classrooms as well as for the whole school.
- 7) **Special activities** such as Open House, Talent Night, and Christmas Programs give parents another view of the activities of the school.
- 8) **Visits** by teachers to the home or by parents dropping by at school provide an informal setting for dialogue between parents and teacher.

4.2 John Calvin School Eagle

For many years, the Staff and the Board have published a monthly school bulletin, **John Calvin School Eagle**. On the fourth Sunday of each school month this home and school bulletin is handed out in the churches, attended by our members.

The purpose of the school paper is to keep the parents and society member up to date concerning the events at school, to inform them concerning the Board's activities, and concerning the latest plans of our Ladies Aid. Since our school is part of a much larger educational world, it is also the task of the principal and the staff to keep you abreast of current issues in education, whether those issues are specific to our own schools or to education in general. Last but not least, each month, the students of a different grade will profile some of their written work.

4.3 Student Evaluation and Progress Reports

Continuous evaluation of student learning is an integral part of teaching. All the stakeholders, in the learning/teaching situation, teachers, students and parents, need to know how well knowledge and skills have been mastered and how well positive attitudes have been fostered.

Evaluation has been broken down into two basic areas:

4.3.1 Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation is conducted continually throughout the course of instruction. Its purpose is to improve instruction and learning, rather than merely to rank or grade students. It keeps both students and teachers aware of the objective to be achieved and the progress being made." ¹ In other words, this form of evaluation is diagnostic in that it attempts to determine how teaching and learning can be done more effectively, especially if there appear to be problems in mastery.

4.3.2 Summative Evaluation

"Summative evaluation occurs at the end of a unit, activity, course, term or program,. It is used with formative evaluation to determine student achievement and program effectiveness. This combined assessment of a student's achievement can be used to evaluate students for the purpose of reporting...." ²

The staff realizes that a simple letter grade cannot provide parents with enough information to properly profile a child's learning. Therefore we have added a number of formative descriptors to most subjects to better indicate a student's strengths or weaknesses. Nevertheless, a term report, regardless of its thoroughness must still be seen as **an invitation to an interview** with the teacher and a stimulus to discuss aspects of the learning.

4.3.3 Letter and Number Codes on our reports

In keeping with the learning descriptors published by the Ministry of Education, our primary report card only use the numbers:

- 1 - Does not yet meet expectations
- 2 - Minimally meets expectations
- 3 - Fully meets expectations
- 4 - Exceeds expectations

Often these numbers are also aligned with rubrics which describe student learning that is qualified by the

¹ Cornfield R.J., et al, Making the Grade, Evaluating Student Progress, Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1987.

² Ibid.

pertinent numbers. (See for example, Performance Standards in Numeracy, Language Arts and Social Responsibility.)

4.3.4 Our Letter Grades and Effort Evaluation (Intermediate Reports)

Our intermediate grade term reports use the same letter grade values used by other British Columbia schools.

A	86 - 100 %	Very Good
B	73 - 85	Good
C+	67 - 72	Average
C	60 - 66	Low Average
C-	50 - 59	Insufficient
D	<50	Very Weak

The letter grade which indicates a student's level of achievement does not say anything about the amount of **effort** that is put into a subject. It could happen that a student received a **B** (Good) in a certain subject, but actually put forth very little effort. Conversely, a student may receive a **C** (Insufficient) in math, for example, but yet, he is working very hard. Therefore, we feel that it is important for parents to know whether their children are putting forth their best efforts. The numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 beside the **A,B,C,D** letter grade are used to indicate student effort:

- 1 - Does not yet meet expectations
- 2 - Minimally meets expectations
- 3 - Fully meets expectations
- 4 - Exceeds expectations

4.3.5 Student Portfolios

A student term report provides the parents with a limited picture of student progress and learning. Therefore the staff, together with the students, has also assembled a portfolio of each student's regular classroom work. The objective of student portfolios is to provide both students and parents with a "snap shot" of regular student achievement. Therefore we will do the following:

- 1) Enter dated work samples from a broad spectrum of subjects: writing, penmanship, art science, socials, quizzes, tests, etc.
- 2) Remove out-dated materials and replace these with current materials.
- 3) Make the portfolios available to you whenever you wish to look at this "snapshot," especially at parent/teacher interviews.
- 4) Work together with the students so that they will take ownership of their portfolio.

4.4 John Calvin School Website

The primary purpose of our website (www.jcss.ca) is parent access to school information. This form of communication is quite new for us (Sept. 2006), so we are still learning what works and what does not work. You can now access our monthly school paper, *The Eagle*, and our weekly bulletin, *The Eaglet*, on our website. Additionally, the Parent Handbook, bus routes, and a photo gallery will contribute to making this electronic communication useful and relevant. Access to the **members section** of this website is limited to those who have the proper **username** and **password**. The secretary at the office can provide you with this information.