

Incident Chronology

School: St. Timothy's Classical Academy | Teacher: Dr. Michael Klaassen

Family identifiers remain redacted. In the chronology, [School] refers to St. Timothy's Classical Academy and [Teacher] refers to Dr. Michael Klaassen.

Child's statement presented at the January 8 meeting

The following is [Child]'s account as presented at the meeting. The incident date is not assigned here because the records provided do not establish an exact date.

I was in Latin class when I absentmindedly stretched out my feet during the lecture. My teacher, [Teacher], saw this and kicked my foot. I said 'ow,' and he responded, 'Stick out your feet again and I'll show you ow.' The class laughed at me, and [Teacher] laughed along with them instead of stopping it.

Later, he noticed my posture wasn't perfect. He lifted me and forcefully pushed my hands onto the desk and pushed my back into the chair. I didn't say anything because he has a reputation among students for being very harsh and yelling. Some kids say he can be rough when he's annoyed - I don't know if that's true, but it made me scared to speak up. Kids were making fun of me during class, and I felt very embarrassed.

January 6, 2026 - Initial written concern

I contacted the school regarding the incident my son had reported. My email stated:

Dear [Principal],

I am writing to formally raise a concern regarding an incident that occurred in [Teacher]'s Latin class involving my son, [Child]. Based on what he has shared, there were moments of physical contact and verbal intimidation that caused him significant discomfort and embarrassment. I am concerned about the safety, well-being, and overall classroom environment he is experiencing.

Until we are able to discuss this matter in detail, I will be keeping [Child] out of Latin class. This is not a decision I make lightly, but I believe it is necessary to ensure his sense of safety while we work toward clarity and resolution.

I also want to ensure that [Child] will not face any academic penalties or retaliation as a result of being kept out of class for safety reasons. I expect that he will continue to receive all assignments, homework, and materials so he can remain current with the course.

I would like to request a meeting with you and any relevant staff as soon as possible to review what happened, understand the expectations around physical interaction in the classroom, and discuss how the school intends to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

Please let me know your earliest availability. I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to resolving it collaboratively.

Sincerely,

[Parent]

The school offered a meeting for January 8 at 3:15 p.m. On January 7, I confirmed that I would pick [Child] up during Latin until the matter was addressed.

January 8, 2026 - Meeting with the school

Questions and handwritten answers / meeting notes

The handwritten notes below are the answers I recorded beside each question during the meeting.

Question 1

What was your reasoning for using physical contact - including kicking his foot and lifting his body - instead of verbal redirection?

Handwritten notes:

Because it works well for physical contact, close relationship with children, rapport.

Question 2

How does this approach align with the school's expectations around physical interaction, student safety, and maintaining dignity?

Handwritten notes:

Does not - not counter with child safety, specific rules, don't have it here.

Question 3

How do you balance discipline with emotional safety, and how do you think your tone and actions are perceived by students?

Handwritten notes:

They are OK, humorous, jovial, not discipline, wanted for [Child] [unclear].

Question 4

Regardless of the situation, what justified using physical force in a way that made [Child] feel unsafe?

Handwritten notes:

Not using physical force for [Child] to feel unsafe.

Question 5

What steps can be taken to ensure [Child] - and all students - feel physically safe and emotionally respected going forward?

Handwritten notes:

To you don't intend to change your style of teaching.

Additional statements recorded after the meeting

These are statements I wrote down from memory after I returned home from the meeting. Statements already captured in the five handwritten answers above are not repeated here.

Teacher:

"I've always taught this way."

"I have 20 years of experience."

Principal:

"Well, the incident was acknowledged."

"We haven't had complaints about [Teacher] before."

"Some families are perfectly fine with his teaching style."

"We can't commit to specific boundaries like that."

"We'll trust the teacher to use his professional judgment."

Board member:

"You should have talked to the teacher directly first."

"This could have been resolved with a simple conversation."

"If my son had been kicked by a teacher, I would ask what he did."

What I said during the meeting

Explanation spoken at the meeting

This is not about strictness or teaching style. It is about basic expectations of dignity, safety, and professional conduct.

When a teacher kicks a student's foot, uses threatening language like 'I'll show you ow,' and laughs along with the class while the student is being mocked, it creates an environment where the child feels singled out and humiliated.

Later in the class, when the teacher lifted [Child] and forcefully pushed his hands onto the desk and pushed his back into the chair, that crossed a physical boundary students rely on for their sense of safety. Even if the intention was correction, the impact was that [Child] felt physically overpowered and unable to speak up.

He also described being afraid to say anything because the teacher has a reputation among students for being very harsh and yelling. Even though he doesn't know whether the stories he's heard are true, the fact that students talk this way creates a climate of fear.

And when kids were making fun of him during class and the teacher did not intervene, it reinforced the sense that he was not protected or supported in that moment.

These actions - the physical force, the threatening language, the public laughter, the lack of intervention, and the climate of fear - all have a real impact on a child's emotional safety. They shape how a student experiences school, how they trust adults, and how they feel about returning to that classroom.

That's why I'm asking these questions. I want to understand the reasoning behind the physical contact, how it aligns with expectations, how tone and classroom culture are managed, and what steps will ensure that [Child] - and all students - feel safe and respected moving forward.

Closing spoken at the meeting

Before we wrap up, I want to be clear about my expectations.

[Child] - and every student - must be treated with dignity, physical safety, and emotional respect.

The concerns raised today involve physical contact, threatening language, and the impact those actions had on his sense of safety.

Going forward, we need to ensure that physical boundaries are respected and that communication supports a safe learning environment for every student. [Child]'s safety is not negotiable.

I expect the steps we discussed to be implemented consistently, and that there will be no further use of physical force or intimidation.

[Child] needs to feel safe returning to this class, and I need confidence that appropriate professional boundaries will be maintained.

Thank you for engaging in this conversation. I look forward to seeing these commitments put into practice so [Child] can learn in an environment that supports his well-being.

January 9, 2026 - Written safety boundaries

The day after the meeting, I sent the Principal a written follow-up:

Dear [Principal],

Thank you again for meeting with me yesterday. Following the written incident summary I provided during our meeting, I'm writing to summarize the safety boundaries and expectations that are necessary to ensure a safe and predictable environment for [Child] in both Latin and History, where he is taught by the same teacher.

While the incident itself was acknowledged during the meeting, the impact on [Child] was minimized and no specific safety boundaries were agreed upon. For clarity and consistency going forward, I am documenting the expectations that are required for his return to these classes.

The following safety boundaries are necessary:

No physical contact of any kind with [Child].
No threatening, sarcastic, or intimidating language.
Humor is welcome in class, but never at a student's expense.
A calm, professional tone in all interactions.
Immediate intervention if peers mock or target him.
A predictable, emotionally safe classroom environment with clear expectations.
No retaliation or negative treatment toward [Child] for raising concerns.
A brief, private check-in before each class for a limited period to ensure he feels safe entering the room.
Administrative oversight to ensure these boundaries are upheld in both Latin and History.

These expectations align with the school's stated commitment to student dignity, emotional safety, and respectful conduct. [Child] will return once these boundaries are in place so he can feel safe and supported in both classes.

If anything in this summary does not match your understanding, please let me know in writing.

Thank you,

[Parent]

Subsequent response from the Board Chair

Following my January 9 email, the Board Chair wrote:

Dear [Parent],

At the end of our meeting on Thursday, I outlined to you the choice that is before your family:

1. To come alongside the school in a spirit of trust and grace in our joint endeavour to form your son according to Christian virtue; or
2. To agree that this is not possible and to part ways.

Let me outline more clearly what either choice entails:

1. Partnership and trust, with grace, is what [School] is all about, and so many families have found (and are finding) the effectiveness of this arrangement. Where discipline is concerned, this can only work when children make a real effort to abide by our code of conduct, and parents support teachers when their children receive correction.

My sense, based on your letter from Friday and the fact that you have already lodged half a dozen complaints against our staff in the past few months, is that you do not currently see the school as a trusted partner in forming your son, but as an adversary to be punished for every perceived mistake, and managed to prevent further transgressions. Your latest communication is an example of this: it represents an attempt to control the behaviour of everyone at the school towards your son, while neglecting to mention any standard of behaviour for him - aside from the expectation that he should never be made to feel uncomfortable by others as a result of the consequences of his actions. This reflects a misunderstanding of the ethos of the school.

In contrast, when my children have complained about incidents at school (which is inevitable), I have always supported the staff in front of my children, even the few times when I had significant reservations. In those instances I raised the issue with staff members personally to get more context, and they were more than willing to discuss these matters with me. Trust is a two-way street - a mutual trust that the teachers and I both have the best interests of the child in mind. And we are all aware of each others' humanity and give grace when mistakes are made, which is also inevitable.

If this sounds like a better way of moving forward, I would be happy to meet with you personally (as a parent who had three children at the school for 12 years) to explain what a functional partnership looks like.

2. The only other option is a parting of ways. As I explained at our meeting, this is not about assigning blame - it is simply a recognition that we are not on the same path. If you do not trust the teachers and administration to provide for the safety of your children, why would you send them to our school? Although at this stage of the year, a withdrawing family should not expect any refund according to our withdrawal policy, as a gesture of goodwill on the part of the school, we would be willing to offer your family a pro-rated refund on your tuition, if this is your choice.

We would be thrilled if there is a true change of heart towards partnership, starting with a meeting with parents, like myself, who understand how this works. At the same time, we would be relieved if you decide to withdraw, because the burden of responding to these repeated complaints is not sustainable for our staff.

We await your family's response prayerfully,

[Board Chair]

Please: do not plug the text of this email into a chatbot and ask it to generate a reply; I will interpret such a reply as choosing Option 2 - a parting of ways.

January 12, 2026 - My response

Dear [Board Chair] and [Principal],

Thank you for your message. At this time, I am pausing further discussion while I focus on ensuring that [Child] feels safe, supported, and settled at school. I will reconnect once I have had the opportunity to review everything fully.

Sincerely,

[Parent]

January 13, 2026 - Children brought to school and conversation with the Principal

On the morning of January 13, 2026, I brought my children to school. I then had a private, one-on-one conversation with the Principal regarding their attendance. My record of that conversation is that the Principal told me to take the children home and that I could not bring them back unless 'trust teacher' was acknowledged.

I asked the Principal to put this requirement in writing. She did not provide it to me in writing. I do not have an email or other written communication from the Principal containing the words 'trust teacher.' The requirement was communicated verbally during our one-on-one conversation, and the description above is my record of what was said.

Child's Mother's written reply before January 17

My wife subsequently wrote to the school:

Dear [Board Chair],

We want to start by saying that we chose [School] because we believe in its Christian mission and its desire to help children grow in wisdom and faith. We understand that discipline and correction are part of that growth, and we don't expect our son to be exempt from them.

At the same time, we care deeply about how that correction is given. It's very important to us that his dignity is preserved, and that he isn't corrected in ways that leave him embarrassed, Since he already struggles socially.

As his parents, we see ourselves as sharing responsibility with the school in helping [Child] learn and grow from discipline. We appreciated your reminder that trust is a two-way street. For us, that trust includes knowing that correction will be given calmly and without physical contact.

When voices are raised or physical actions are used, it can make it harder for [Child] to understand what he's being corrected for and to grow from the experience. Our hope is simply that discipline can consistently happen in a way that helps him feel safe enough to reflect, learn, and do better.

We know that a true partnership takes humility, patience, and grace from everyone involved. We are open to continuing to reflect on how we can move forward together with greater understanding. We believe that Christian community calls us to speak with kindness, listen well, and keep the good of the child at the center of our decisions.

Our sincere hope is that there is a way forward that allows [Child] to continue growing at [School] - spiritually, emotionally, and academically - in a place where he feels known, supported, and encouraged, even when he makes mistakes.

[Child's Mother]

January 17, 2026 - Written notice that the children would not be received

On January 17 at 12:04 p.m., we received a written communication whose body was signed by the Board Chair:

Dear [Parents],

Thank you for your reply, and for indicating your desire for a meeting to explore true partnership with [School].

In my email, I indicated that a partnership "can only work when children make a real effort to abide by our code of conduct, and parents support teachers...", and the rest of my email was focused on the parental support aspect of the partnership. At our meeting, we will also need to explore the first aspect: the child's effort at disciplined conduct.

[Principal] and I will plan the meeting to explore both of these subjects, with the aim of coming to an agreement about the future of your family at [School]. In the meantime, we will not be able to receive your children at the school.

I have time to meet with both of you along with [Principal] next Thursday at 3:15pm at the school. Please reply all to let us know if this time is convenient for you, or if we need to reschedule.

In Him,

[Board Chair]

January 28, 2026 - Children started at a new school

On January 28, 2026, my children began attending a new school.

Purpose of this chronology

1. My son's own account of the classroom incident was presented at the January 8 meeting.
2. I raised the concern with the school in writing on January 6.
3. At the January 8 meeting, the five questions are now shown together with the answers/notes I recorded for each question.
4. Additional meeting statements are listed only when they are not already included with the five questions.
5. On January 9, I put the safety boundaries I was requesting in writing.
6. The Board Chair subsequently presented two choices: come alongside the school in a spirit of "trust and grace," or "part ways."
7. On January 13, according to my record of the private conversation, I was told to take the children home and not bring them back unless "trust teacher" was acknowledged.
8. My wife then wrote acknowledging discipline, affirming willingness to work in partnership, and asking that correction be calm and without physical contact.
9. On January 17, the Board Chair wrote: "In the meantime, we will not be able to receive your children at the school."
10. On January 28, 2026, my children began attending a new school.

I have retained the original, unredacted emails and records supporting this chronology and can provide them if required.

Sincerely,

[Parent]