

# Policy on Grievances and Complaints

## 1. General Grievance & Dispute Principals

1.1 The Board accepts responsibility for providing a means by which complainants can hold parties accountable for their actions. The Board desires that complaints be resolved expeditiously without disrupting the educational process.

1.2 The Board encourages the early, informal resolution of complaints whenever possible.

1.3 The Board prohibits retaliation against complainants. The Executive Director or designee at his/her discretion may keep a complainant's identity confidential, except to the extent necessary to investigate the complaint. SCHOOL will not investigate anonymous complaints unless it so desires.

1.4. SCHOOL will disseminate annually a written notice of the SCHOOL's complaint procedures to students, employees, parents/guardians, advisory committees, and other interested parties.

## 2. Complaints Concerning SCHOOL Employees

2.1. The Executive Director or designee shall develop regulations which permit the public to submit complaints against SCHOOL employees in an appropriate way. These regulations shall protect the rights of involved parties. The Board may serve as an appeals body if the complaint is not resolved.

2.2. The Executive Director or designee shall determine whether a complaint should be considered a complaint against SCHOOL and/or an individual employee, and whether it should be resolved by the SCHOOL' process for complaints concerning personnel and/or other SCHOOL procedures.

2.3. To promote prompt and fair resolution of the complaint, the following procedures shall govern the resolution of complaints against SCHOOL employees:

### 2.3.1. Parent-Employee Meeting

2.3.1.1. Every effort should be made to resolve a complaint at the earliest possible stage. Whenever possible, the complainant should communicate directly to the employee in order to resolve concerns. Resolution protocol should be as follows:

a. Parent speak with employee (e.g.teacher, specialist, staff member)

b. If not resolved by this meeting, parent should then speak with employee's mentor teacher (if applicable) or Education Coordinator.

c. If not resolved by previous meeting then parent should take up their concern with the Executive Director.

#### 2.3.2. Parent Complaint to Executive Director

2.3.2.1. If a complainant is unable or unwilling to resolve the complaint directly with the employee, he/she may submit an oral or written complaint to the Executive Director or his/her designee who will attempt to resolve the complaint.

2.3.2.2. A copy of the written complaint will be provided to the affected employee.

#### 2.3.3. Parent Complaint to the SCHOOL Board

2.3.3.1. When a parent complaint to the Executive Director does not result in a resolution of the complaint, the Board may elect to review the complaint if requested by the parent.

2.3.3.2. If the Board elects to review the complaint, the written complaint, accompanied by the written response of the Executive Director (copies of which have been provided to the affected employee), will be reviewed in Closed Session of the Board and a written response provided to both the parent making the complaint and the affected employee.

2.3.3.3. Complaints related to the Executive Director should first seek resolution through direct communication between the complainant and the Executive Director. If a complainant is unable or unwilling to resolve the complaint directly with the Executive Director, they may request review of the complaint by the Board. The complaint should be filed in writing with the Board.

2.3.3.4. The decision of the Board shall be final.

2.4. Any complaint of child abuse or neglect alleged against a SCHOOL employee shall be reported to the appropriate local agencies in accordance with law, Board policy and administrative regulation.

### **3. Personnel Complaints**

3.1. The Board recognizes the need to establish a process to allow employees and job applicants to have their concerns heard in an expeditious and unbiased manner. The Board expects that employees will make every effort to resolve complaints and disagreements informally before filing a formal complaint.

3.2. The Board prohibits retaliation against complainants. The Executive Director or designee may keep a complainant's identity confidential, except to the extent necessary to investigate the complaint.

3.3. All matters related to a complaint shall be kept confidential and any document, communication, or record regarding the complaint shall be placed in a separate file and shall not be placed in an employee's personnel file.

3.4. Except as specified below, the following procedure shall be used for any complaint by an employee alleging misapplication of the School' policies, regulations, rules, or procedures or for "whistleblower" complaints by an employee or job applicant regarding an improper SCHOOL activity including, but not limited to, an allegation of gross mismanagement, a significant waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a specific danger to public health or safety. Any of the time limits specified in this procedure may be extended by written agreement between SCHOOL and complainant.

#### 3.4.1. Step 1: Informal Complaint Process

3.4.1.1. Prior to instituting a formal, written complaint, the employee shall first discuss the issue with the Executive Director. Formal complaint procedures shall not be initiated until the employee has first attempted to resolve the complaint informally.

#### 3.4.2. Step 2: Site Level Formal Complaint Process

3.4.2.1. If a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved through the informal process in Step 1, the complainant may file a written complaint with the Executive Director or designee within 60 days of the act or event which is the subject of the complaint. If an employee fails to file a written complaint within 60 days, the complaint shall be considered settled on the basis of the answer given at the preceding step.

3.4.2.2. In the written complaint, the employee shall specify the nature of the problem, including names, dates, locations, witnesses, the remedy sought by the employee, and a description of informal efforts to resolve the issue.

3.4.2.3. Within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, the Executive Director or designee shall conduct any necessary investigation and meet with the complainant in an effort to resolve the complaint. Within five working days after the meeting, he/she shall prepare and send a written response to the complainant.

#### 3.4.3. Step 3: Appeal to the Board

3.4.3.1. If a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved at Step 2, the complainant may file a written appeal to the Board within five working days of receiving the Executive Director or designee's response. All information presented at Steps 1 and 2 shall be included with the appeal and the Executive Director or designee shall submit to the Board a written report describing attempts to resolve the complaint along with all documented responses.

3.4.3.2. The Board may uphold the findings by the Executive Director or designee without hearing the complaint or the Board may hear the complaint at a regular or special Board meeting. The hearing shall be held in closed session if the complaint relates to matters that may be addressed in closed session in accordance with law.

3.4.3.3. The Board shall make its decision within 45 days of the hearing and shall send its decision to all concerned parties. The Board's decision shall be final.

BOARD APPROVED ON: \_\_\_\_\_.

