

## **Policy – School Community Relations**

### **K.2 – Parent/Student Grievance Process**

The Board of Directors and Administration of Community Leadership Academy/Victory Preparatory Academy seek to provide the highest quality service to the public and desires to improve wherever service may be deficient. Therefore, the administration invites input from parents and patrons of the school.

The Board of Directors presumes that all staff act in a professional manner and in accordance with the adopted curriculum and instructional strategies. However, the Board recognizes the rights of individuals and groups to present their concerns directly related to the curriculum, instructional materials, instructional strategies, and educational activities in the school. These concerns may be addressed at Open Forum. This policy provides a fair, orderly, and timely process for handling personnel complaints, which will be handled in closed session.

The Board relies first on the teachers and staff to handle the concerns of the public. It is the policy of the Board to provide for resolution at the level most directly involved first and in an informal manner if possible. However, if such resolution cannot be accomplished, a hearing may be requested to discuss this matter. Such a hearing will only be granted if the complainant has followed the procedure set forth in this document.

The Academy trusts, values, and supports its employees and seeks to protect them against unwarranted and unnecessary attacks. Therefore, all formal complaints by members of the public concerning school personnel shall be in writing and bear the signature of the concerned party. Anyone who defames a CLA/VPA employee and damages a person's professional reputation, whether before students or any third party, may be subject to legal action brought by the employee.

#### **Provisions:**

- A. Nothing contained herein shall be construed so as to limit in any way the ability of, or authority for staff and the grievant to resolve any grievance informally.
- B. This grievance procedure shall take precedence over any other formal grievance procedure.
- C. Failure to file or pursue a grievance or appeal, at any step of the procedure, in a timely fashion as specified herein bars any further proceedings to that grievance.
- D. Failure to adhere to published grievance provisions and/or procedures bars any further proceeding to that grievance.

Parents/guardians or patrons of the school who wish to express a concern must follow the provision above and the procedure listed below:

1. Initial Communication: A member of the public with a concern or complaint about a staff member must try to resolve the matter directly and informally with the staff member concerned.
2. Review: If the matter cannot be resolved informally at the initial level, the concerned party may submit a written grievance describing their concerns in a clear, specific, and detailed manner and submit it to school administration.
3. A written grievance must be submitted within ten school days of the act on which the complaint is based. If not so presented, the complaint will not be recognized and shall be considered waived.
4. The administrator shall investigate the facts and communicate with the concerned party and then with the staff person(s) named in the written statement in an effort to facilitate a mutually acceptable resolution.
5. The issue shall be resolved within ten school days from the receipt of the written statement unless the parties involved mutually agree to extend that period. After that time period, the administrator will supply the concerned party with a written result of the investigation.
6. Appeal: If the issue has not been resolved to the concerned party's satisfaction, they may submit a written appeal within ten school days to the Chief Executive Officer.
7. The Chief Executive Officer may hold a conference of all parties involved within ten school days. The concerned party will receive a written response within ten school days after reviewing the appeal or having the conference.
8. Appeal to the Board of Directors: If the issue is still not resolved to the concerned party's satisfaction, he or she may submit a written appeal within ten school days to the Board of Directors.
9. The Board has the discretion to accept or reject the Chief Executive Officer's resolution of the issue. The Board of Directors will give its decision by the next regular meeting (or sooner, if the situation warrants). If the Board rejects the Chief Executive Officer's decision, it will hear the matter at the first regular session. A vote by a simple majority of the Board members shall be required to come to a decision. The matter will be heard in closed session unless the parties agree to have it in open session. The Board of Directors will supply the concerned party with a verbal or written result of the investigation.

Additional Notes:

- A grievant is not required to address the issue with the person directly involved if the grievant is alleging harassment or discrimination.
- In case of grievances relating to allegations of harassment or discrimination against students, please see the school's Harassment and Discrimination Investigation Procedures for Students Policy available here: <https://www.communityleadershipacademy.org/> Family/Student Handbook.
- In case of grievances relating to allegations of sex-based harassment, please see the school's Sex-Based Harassment Investigation Procedures Policy available here: <https://www.communityleadershipacademy.org/> and the Family/Student Handbook.

## **CSI GRIEVANCE POLICY**

The Colorado Charter School Institute (“CSI”) believes that many grievances are best handled by the institute charter school and seeks to encourage the proper resolution of grievances at the school level. As such, the CSI board directs each institute charter school to adopt a Grievance Policy in accordance with this policy and the institute school’s charter contract. The policy must provide an opportunity for comment by the grievant in public hearing on the matter and an appeal process. Unless otherwise provided by law, the final administrative appeal will be heard by the institute charter school board, not the CSI board, subject to review by the CSI Executive Director in appropriate circumstances and in line with this policy.

### **School-Level Procedures**

In the event of a conflict between the staff, administrators, or board members of an institute charter school and a parent, staff, or community member (current or former), the grievant must first exhaust all available remedies under the institute charter school's Grievance Policy as required by the institute charter school's charter contract and this policy. The institute charter school’s Grievance Policy shall:

1. Provide a tiered approach to handling grievances whereby the grievant shall first attempt to resolve the issues at the lowest possible level. If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant, the grievant may then appeal to the next level of review. This tiered approach shall generally describe the following succession: Individual Staff Member > School Leader > School Board > CSI Executive Director. However, the institute charter school must establish alternate procedures for addressing conflicts of interest, such as where a grievant may have a complaint against the School Leader.
2. Provide clear instructions for appealing a decision to the next level of review, including:
  - a. Any requirements for filing the complaint and the physical and/or website location of the complaint form, if available;
  - b. The timeframes for a response by the recipient once a complaint is filed.
3. Provide information for where contact information can be located for each of the levels of review.
  - a. Each institute charter school shall post on its website a calendar reflecting the institute charter school board’s meeting schedule and contact information for the institute charter school board. At a minimum, this contact information shall include an email and/or mailing address for the institute charter school board or board chair;

- b. The Grievance Policy shall include the general contact information for CSI (e.g., the CSI main line 303.866.3299 or CSI\_Info@CSI.state.co.us).

4. Provide a clear opportunity for the grievant to comment on his/her perception of the treatment or service level received from the institute charter school, including in a public hearing on the matter.
5. Provide a clear opportunity for the institute charter school to comment on its perception of the incident and the steps taken to try and resolve the issue(s).

Redirect individuals to alternate policies and procedures for complaints relating to harassment or discrimination, including sex-based harassment. In following the institute charter school's Grievance Policy, each party must consider the following with regard to conflict resolution:

1. Recognize that CSI does not have authority to intervene in many school-level disputes.
2. Address the issue at the appropriate level and proceed with the Grievance Policy that the institute charter school has in place.
3. Recognize that the grievance process may differ depending on the nature and severity of the issue involved.
4. Ensure grievants have appropriate access to and familiarity with the institute charter school's board.
5. If the concern involves a student with an IEP or 504 Plan, the institute charter school shall inform the Special Education Coordinator.
6. If the concern involves a student safety issue, the institute charter school shall immediately notify CSI.
7. CSI may intervene prior to full exhaustion of the institute charter school's grievance process when the issue involves a contract violation, safety issue, a student with an IEP or 504 Plan, or any other material violation of state or federal laws or regulations.
8. Decisions will not be overturned at a higher level of authority unless there are compelling grounds that an institute charter school discriminated against a protected class, violated its contract with CSI, failed to follow its own policies, Institute policies or requirements, or violated any other state or federal law, rule, or policy.
9. Recognize that where the complaint involves the School Leader, the institute charter school's board chair will be contacted where appropriate.
10. The grievance process shall appropriately account for language barriers and provide accommodations to and equal access for families where English is their second language.

**CSI-Level Procedures**

If a grievant contacts CSI regarding a grievance, CSI shall redirect the grievant to the institute charter school's Grievance Policy. If a grievant has followed the institute charter school's Grievance Policy in its entirety and wishes to pursue a concern because it has not been resolved to his or her satisfaction, CSI shall direct the grievant to the following grievance procedures:

1. The grievant must submit the concern in a written format to CSI within ten business days after receiving the written decision of the institute charter school board. When submitting the complaint, the grievant shall include a copy of the response provided by the institute charter school board.
2. CSI's Executive Director or designee will make the institute charter school aware of the concern and determine if any violation of law, rule, policy, or the charter contract has been committed.
3. After review, and to the extent practicable, CSI's Executive Director will publish his/her conclusions in writing within 15 calendar days of receipt of the written concern.
4. Decisions will not be overturned by CSI's Executive Director unless there are compelling grounds that an institute charter school discriminated against a protected class, violated its contract with CSI, failed to follow its own policies, CSI policies or requirements, or violated any other state or federal law, rule, or policy.
5. If, after review, CSI's Executive Director concludes that a violation has occurred, CSI's Executive Director will inform the institute charter school administration in writing of the violation and direct that the institute charter school resolve the situation with the grievant. CSI may implement procedures in line with CSI's Compliance Policy and take any actions provided for in law, policy or contract to resolve the issue.
6. The decision of the CSI Executive Director is final.

**LEGAL REF:**

C.R.S. § 22-30.5-505(3)(a) (State Charter School Institute - Institute Board - appointment - powers and duties – rules)