

Subject: Employee Complaints
Effective Date: TBD Upon Board Approval
Approved By: Board of Directors
Policy: 8005.1

The Vista Springs Charter School ("VSCS") Board of Directors recognizes the need for providing employees with a complaint process to complain about an VSCS staff member.

The Board expects that employees and supervisors will make every effort to resolve employee complaints and disagreements informally before resorting to formal complaint procedures.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish complaint procedures which allow employees to appeal to the Board.

PERSONNEL - EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The following guidelines shall prescribe the manner in which complaints by an VSCS employee about a co-worker are handled:

1. A "complaint" shall be defined as an alleged misapplication of the school's policies, regulations, rules or procedures, instruction/pedagogy, or significant discomfort felt by or towards an employee. Procedures for the resolution of employee complaints provide a route of appeal through administrative channels and to the Board, if necessary.
2. Complaints involving unlawful harassment or sexual harassment are addressed under VSCS's "Harassment-Free Workplace Policy." The VSCS Uniform Complaint Policy/Procedure ("UCP") shall be used to address all complaints which allege that the Charter School has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs.
3. So as not to interfere with school schedules, meetings related to a complaint shall be held before or after the complainant's regular working hours.
4. All matters related to a complaint shall be kept as confidential as possible, but in some circumstances absolute confidentiality cannot be assured.

5. All documents, communications, and records dealing with the complaint shall be placed in a school complaint file.
6. No reprisals shall be taken against any participant in a complaint procedure by reason of such participation.
7. Time limits specified in these procedures may be reduced or extended in any specific instance by written mutual agreement of the parties involved. If specified or adjusted time limits expire, the complaint may proceed to the next step.
8. Any complaint not taken to the next step within prescribed time limits shall be considered settled on the basis of the answer given at the preceding step.
9. At all times, employees are expected to act professionally and handle complaints with discretion and the preservation of dignity for all parties involved. Gossip and complaints to staff members with no ability to solve the problem is counterproductive and to be avoided.

Informal Complaints

Employees and those with complaints about employees are encouraged to resolve complaints informally. Informal efforts to resolve the issues include:

1. The complainant should first address his or her concerns to the person with whom the complainant has an issue. If the complainant is uncomfortable going directly to the person involved, s/he may go immediately to step 2.
2. The complainant should discuss the concerns with his or her immediate supervisor. In the case of a non-employee complaining about an employee, the complainant should go to the employee's supervisor. If the concerns are ABOUT the supervisor and the complainant is uncomfortable, s/he may go directly to step 3.
3. The last step in the informal process is for the employee to discuss the issue with the Director of Human Resources. If the issues are not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, s/he may initiate the formal complaint procedure.

Formal Complaint Procedure - Step 1

If a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved by informal procedures, the complainant may file a written complaint with the immediate supervisor or Human Resources within 60 days of the act or event which is the subject of the complaint.

Within fifteen working days of receiving the complaint, the immediate supervisor or HR shall conduct any necessary investigation and meet with the complainant in an effort to resolve the complaint.

The immediate supervisor or HR shall present all concerned parties with a written

answer to the complaint within thirty working days after the meeting. Specific information in the response regarding disciplinary steps taken, if any, will be limited to appropriate privacy levels.

Formal Complaint Procedure - Step 2

If a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved in Step 1, the complainant may file the written complaint with the Superintendent or designee within five working days of receiving the answer at Step 1. All information presented at Step 1 shall be included with the complaint, and the immediate supervisor or HR shall submit to the Superintendent or designee a report describing attempts to resolve the complaint at Step 1.

Within ten working days of receiving the complaint, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct any necessary investigation and meet with the complainant in an effort to resolve the complaint.

The Superintendent or designee shall present all concerned parties with a written answer to the complaint within ten working days after the meeting.

Formal Complaint Procedure - Step 3

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 answer at Step 2. All information presented at Steps 1 and 2 shall be included with the appeal, and the Superintendent or designee shall submit to the Board a report describing attempts to resolve the complaint at Step 2.

An appeal hearing shall be held at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting which falls at least 12 days after the appeal is filed. This hearing shall be held in closed session if the complaint relates to matters properly addressed in closed session.

The Board shall make its decision within 30 days of the hearing and shall mail its decision to all concerned parties. The Board's decision shall be final.

Report complaints to Vista Springs Charter School 43466 Business Park Dr. Temecula 92590 / 951 252-8800.