

Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances Policy

Policy Statement: Students and parents have the right and responsibility to express school related concerns and grievances to the faculty and administration. Students and parents shall be assured the opportunity for an orderly presentation and timely review of concerns which will not interfere with regular scheduled classes or school related activities. Students may use this procedure in reporting instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student, noting that this shall not prohibit the ability of a student to report the incident to law enforcement authorities.

(Section 20-2-751.7. State mandates a process for students to follow in reporting instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by teacher or other school personnel; notice of process; training; investigations)

A. Process for Presenting a Complaint or Grievance:

- (a) The complaint or grievance should first be presented at the lowest level of authority as follows:
 - Classroom related concerns – to the Teacher
 - Extra-curricular related concerns – to the Sponsor/Coach
 - All other School related concerns – to the Principal
- (b) If the Parent, Guardian, or Student does not agree with the result the complaint or grievance should be presented to the next level of authority as follows:
 - Teachers – to the Principal
 - Extra-curricular Sponsors/Coaches – to the Principal
 - The Principal – to the Superintendent
- (c) If the Parent, Guardian, or Student does not agree with the result, an appeal may be filed with the next level of authority as follows:
 - The Principal – to the Superintendent
 - The Superintendent – to The Board

B. Process for Reporting an Allegation of Sexually Inappropriate Behavior

- (a) Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other schoolsystem employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at the school.
- (b) Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and

written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.

- (c) Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

"Sexual abuse" means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5

Responses to a Complaint or Grievance:

1. The faculty and administration shall make an honest and forthright effort to resolve complaints or grievances as quickly as possible at the most immediate level of authority.
2. Decisions rendered by the Governing Board shall be considered final. All official complaints must be presented to the Board in accordance with the Public Participation at Meetings of the Governing Board or Board Committees Policy Section D, number 2, Formal Appeals, Complaints, and Petitions.
3. If it is determined that a complaint against a teacher, administrator, or other school employee is unsubstantiated and without merit, the local school system shall, at the request of the aggrieved party, submit a written statement to that effect to all local print and television media outlets that published any articles or reported any news relating to such complaint against the teacher, administrator, or employee.