



COMMON GROUND NEW HAVEN ECOLOGY PROJECT, INC

Cultivating habits of healthy living and sustainable environmental practices within a diverse community of children, adults, and families.

Grievance Procedure for Section 504, Title IX, and Title VII Regulations

The Board of Education does not knowingly condone discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or handicap in admission or access to, or treatment, or employment in its programs or activities.

Inquiries regarding compliance, including receipt and investigation of any complaint alleging non-compliance may be directed to the School Director or his/her designee in the Director's absence.

Definitions

A "grievance" is a complaint by an employee, or group of employees, or a student or group of students based upon an alleged violation of the provisions of Section 504, Title IX, or Title VII.

The term "employee" is considered to apply to any employee of Common Ground High School. The term "student" is considered to apply to any student enrolled in the Nutmeg Public Schools. The term "teacher" is considered to apply to any teacher employed by Common Ground High School. The "teacher," "employee," or "student" may include a group of teachers or a group of employees or a group of students who are similarly affected by a grievance.

An "aggrieved person" is the person or persons making the claim.

The term "days," when used in this article, shall, except when otherwise indicated, mean working days.

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible administrative level, equitable solutions to the problems which may arise under the provisions of Section 504, Title IX, or Title VII.

The parties agree that these proceedings shall be kept as informal and confidential as may be appropriate at any level of the procedure.

Nothing herein contained shall be construed as limiting the right of the complainant having a problem to discuss the matter informally with any appropriate member of the administration.

Any complainant shall have the right at any time to present any grievance to such persons and through such channels as are designated for that purpose in this article.

Time Limits

Since it is important that grievances be processed as rapidly as possible, the number of days indicated at each level should be considered as a maximum, and every effort should be made to expedite the process. The time limits specified may, however, be extended by mutual agreement in writing.

If a complainant does not file a grievance in writing as provided herein within 30 days after the aggrieved person knew or should have known of the act or condition on which the grievance is based, then the grievance shall be considered waived.

Informal Procedure

Any student, employee or applicant to a program who feels that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or handicap shall contact the School Director within 30 days of the alleged occurrence to discuss the nature of the complaint.

The Director shall maintain a written record which shall contain the following:

1. Full name and address of complainant.
2. Full name and position of person(s) who allegedly discriminated against the complainant.
3. A concise statement of the facts constituting the alleged discrimination.
4. Dates of the alleged discrimination.

At the time the alleged discrimination complaint is filed, School Director shall review and explain the grievance procedures with the complainant and answer any questions. S/he shall then determine whether to resolve said complaints through formal or informal procedures, and will immediately undertake or authorize an investigation. Informal proceedings will be conducted by the school Director or his/her designee. Complaints requiring formal procedures shall be immediately forwarded to the school's Title IX officer, who will conduct a formal investigation. All complaints involving school administrators should be made directly to the Title IX officer

The School Board hereby designates Betsy Sneath as the School's Title IX Coordinator. Ms. Sneath's contact information:

Betsy Sneath
Title IX Coordinator
Common Ground High School
358 Springside Avenue
New Haven, CT 06515
(203) 389-0823 ext. 1211

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of either formal or informal procedures, s/he can appeal the decision. The appeal must be initiated within twenty (20) school days from the date of the original discussion with the school Director.

Appeal Procedure—Informal Proceedings

Complainants who are not satisfied with the outcome of informal proceedings can request a Formal Investigation. This appeal should be in writing and must be initiated within twenty (20) school days from the date of the original discussion with the school Director.

Appeal Procedure—Formal Proceedings

1. Level One - School Director

If a complainant is not satisfied with the disposition of the problem through formal procedures, he/she may submit a formal appeal in writing to the School Director.

The School Director shall within five (5) days render a decision and the reasons therefore in writing to the complainant, with a copy to the Executive Director.

2. Level Two –Executive Director

If the complainant is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance at Level One, or if no decision has been rendered within five (5) days after presentation of the grievance in writing, the complainant may file a written appeal for a hearing by the Executive Director within five (5) days.

The Executive Director shall represent the administration at Level Two of the grievance procedure. Within five (5) days after receipt of the written appeal for a hearing by the Executive Director, the Executive Director shall meet with the complainant for the purpose of resolving the grievance. A full record of such hearing shall be kept by the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall within three (3) days of the hearing render the decision and the reasons therefore in writing to the complainant.

3. Level Three – School Board

If the complainant is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance at Level Two, or if no decision has been rendered within three (3) days after first meeting with the Executive Director, the person may file the grievance again with the Board of Education within five (5) days.

Within ten (10) days after receiving the written appeal, the Board shall meet with the complainant for the purpose of resolving the grievance. The decision of the Board shall be rendered in writing within three (3) days.

General Provisions

Decisions rendered at all levels of the formal grievance shall be in writing setting forth the decision and the reasons therefore.

All documents, communications and records dealing with the processing of a grievance shall be filed separately from the existing files of the participants.

Any person may also file a complaint of illegal discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights, Washington, D.C., at the same time he/she files the grievance during or after use of the grievance process, or without using the grievance process at all. If a complaint is filed with the Office for Civil Rights, it must be filed in writing no later than 180 days after the occurrence of the possible discrimination.

Regulation approved: 10-6-09