

**Woodland Charter School
Policy Manual
Adopted: December 15, 2015
Date to Review: December 15, 2016
Revised March 7, 2017
Date to Review March 2019**

Woodland Charter School Grievance Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and directions for resolution of grievances.

In this regard, the objective is to perpetuate a climate of collegiality, mutual trust, and respect by resolving differences in a timely, objective, and equitable manner.

Scope

This procedure deals with grievances which are not covered by other established school policies. Such conflicts are often interpersonal in nature and usually fall into one of the following categories:

- Parent conflicts with another parent, a teacher, a student, or a staff member
- Teacher conflicts with another teacher, a parent, a student, or a staff member
- Student conflicts with another student, a parent, a teacher, or a staff member
- Staff member conflicts with another staff member, a student, a parent, or a teacher.

Background

Disagreement may arise in any community; such differences are an inevitable consequence of human interaction. In a majority of these situations, the parties involved resolve the problems. This procedure is designed to assist in the resolution of disagreements in those instances where the parties are unable to settle their differences.

Responsibility for the Grievance Procedure

The Woodland Charter School Administrator ultimately is responsible for ensuring that the process for resolution of grievances is followed. Authority for the process is routinely designated as described below.

In the event the Grievance involves the Administrator, the Charter Council will appoint a Charter Council Member to ensure the process for resolution of grievances is followed. The Charter Council Member appointed would recuse them-self from Level 5 of this policy.

Exceptions

This procedure is designed to moderate the effects of and to assist in the resolution of all of the types of conflict listed above. An exception will normally be made in the case of student conflicts with other persons and student conflicts with students. In those cases, every effort will be made to resolve the conflict at Levels 1 or 2, with deference to the expertise and opinion of the teacher and Administrator. In such cases, the School Administrator is authorized to determine whether the matter should be resolved through further levels of this Grievance Policy. The matter may also be subject to one or more policies of the school, such as the Behavior Management Policy or the Three Rivers School District Discipline Policy.

All levels must be followed unless otherwise noted.

Levels of Resolution

Level 1: Direct Resolution

The direct resolution process consists of a face to face meeting or meetings between the parties involved without others in attendance. Unless there is a bona fide safety concern, an attempt at direct resolution is to be made prior to requesting Administrative Resolution.

Level 2: Administrative Resolution

At this point and forward at every level, the grievance will be thoroughly documented on the “Grievance Timeline Form” by the Administrator creating a narrative of the Grievance at each Level.

The Administrative Resolution process consists of a meeting between the parties involved with the School Administrator in attendance. At least one of the involved parties must request Administrative Resolution in writing and state explicitly that it is being requested under Level 2 of the school Grievance Policy.

An attempt to meet must occur within 10 business days of such a request. If this action is not taken by the aggrieved party, the grievance procedure will be considered closed.

Once a grievance has reached Level 2, all communication regarding the grievance is to remain in official meetings with the Administrator and the involved parties.

Should the conflict involve the School Administrator as an interested party, the appointed Charter Council Member will facilitate Level 2 of the grievance policy.

Document findings/resolutions.

Level 3: Optional Mediated Resolution

If the Administrator (or Charter Council Member appointed instead of the Administrator) deems Mediated Resolution necessary the grievance procedure will continue with Level 3.

The Mediated Resolution process consists of a meeting or meetings between the parties involved with an unbiased third party in attendance. At least one of the involved parties must request Mediated Resolution in writing to the School Administrator and state explicitly that it is being requested under Level 3 of the school Grievance Policy.

The role of a Mediator: Assists and guides parties in constructive discussion, with the goal of the aggrieved parties finding a mutually agreeable resolution. The mediator does not decide the outcome, but helps the parties understand and focus on the important issues needed to reach a resolution. A Mediator is skilled at sifting through facts, emotions and individual interests of the parties involved to determine what the issues are.

In most cases, the unbiased 3rd party is a trained Mediator. Woodland Charter School will provide up to two hours of paid mediation services if the grievance involves school employees or Charter Council. Further costs must be borne by the aggrieved party. As an alternative to such a professional, a member of the school community may serve as Mediator with the approval of all parties involved.

If the aggrieved party is not satisfied, they are responsible to initiate the next level of grievance procedure within 10 business days, or the grievance procedure will be considered closed.

In those cases in which the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved, an appeal may be made to the Charter Council. The appeal must be in writing and must be submitted to the Administrator within 10 business days after conclusion of the mediation.

Document findings/resolutions.

Level 4: Charter Council

Within 10 business days after the optional Mediation is finished, any involved party may file a written appeal to the Charter Council.

The Charter Council shall decide at its next regular meeting whether to hear the matter and set a date for hearing.

- If the Charter Council chooses to hear the appeal, a decision will be rendered within 10 business days of the appeal.
- If it chooses not to hear the matter, the decision reached in Mediation shall be final. If the Charter Council hears and decides the matter, the decision of the Charter Council shall constitute the final decision of the school.
- A dissatisfied party may have the right to seek a hearing with the Superintendent of the Three Rivers School District, and/or may have other avenues of legal redress. In this case, they should submit an appeal to the Superintendent at Three Rivers School District. At this point, the grievance is now closed at Woodland Charter School.

Document findings/resolutions.

This policy supersedes all previous policies related to grievances.

Approved by the Woodland Charter School Charter Council on _____.