



SANKOFA MONTESSORI GRIEVANCE (COMPLAINT) AND WHISTLEBLOWER POLICIES

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SANKOFA MONTESSORI GRIEVANCE (COMPLAINT) AND WHISTLEBLOWER POLICIES	1
1. GRIEVANCE POLICY	2
Family Grievances	2
Scope of Complaint Procedure	2
Family Grievance Procedure	2
Employee Grievances	4
Scope of Complaint Procedure	4
Employee Grievance Procedure	4
2. WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY	5



1. GRIEVANCE POLICY

Family Grievances

Sankofa Montessori will make every effort possible to resolve any concerns from students, families, and teachers at the management level through collaborative meetings to review data, consider student, family, and educator perspectives, and to make the best decision for our students. In any case, where families remain unsatisfied, they can engage in our grievance policy.

Scope of Complaint Procedure

Any grievance at the school will fall into one of three primary categories:

- 1) Complaints about a student, the classroom experience, or a teacher;
- 2) Complaints or concerns about a school-wide policy or administration; or
- 3) Complaints or concerns about a parent/guardian or community member involved with the school.

Any enrolled family may file a complaint concerning any of these categories. The complaint should be in writing, and every attempt should have been made to settle the issue with individual conversations before bringing a formal grievance.

Family Grievance Procedure

- 1) **Step One: Informal Discussion.** A family having a grievance hereunder shall make a good-faith effort to resolve the matter through informal discussions with the individual(s) involved in the matter and/or with the employee's direct supervisor, within five (5) working days of the occurrence or cause of such matter.
- 2) **Step Two: Administrative Review.** If the matter cannot be resolved through informal discussion, the aggrieved family may submit their complaint, in writing, to the Student Support Specialist within ten (10) working days after the most recent event upon which the complaint is based. The written complaint should include identification of the problem, a description of the efforts undertaken to informally resolve the dispute, and a proposed resolution. The Student Support Specialist will respond to the complainant with confirmation of receipt and explanation of grievance process and timeline (which will include notifying families of their rights to engage in due process or file a complaint with the SBOE, when appropriate). The Student Support Specialist will make every reasonable effort to schedule a meeting to occur within ten (10) working days of receipt of the complaint with the Student Support Specialist and any other person(s) whose actions or decisions give rise to the matter. At such meeting, each party will have the opportunity to be heard and to request relief. Within three (3) working days or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable, the Student Support Specialist will issue a written



recommendation as to how the matter should be resolved. All parties present at the meeting shall receive copies of the written recommendation.

- 3) Step Three: Review by Executive Director. If the aggrieved family remains dissatisfied after administrative review, the family may, within ten (10) working days of receipt of the Student Support Specialist's written recommendation, submit the complaint to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will meet with the family to go over the complaint and discuss the matter with all parties involved. This meeting shall take place within ten (10) working days of the Executive Directors' receipt of the complaint, or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable given the circumstances. The Executive Director shall make every reasonable effort to prepare a written decision within five (5) working days of the meeting with the family. All parties present at the meeting shall receive copies of the written decision. The Executive Director will also alert the Executive Committee for informational purposes at this stage. For Category 1 grievances, the Executive Director shall make the final determination, and any further appeal by the family should be in accordance with Step Five below.
- 4) Step Four: Review by the Board or a Committee thereof. If the aggrieved family remains dissatisfied after review by the Executive Director of a Category 2 or 3 complaint, the family may appeal the Executive Director's decision by filing within ten (10) working days of the decision, with the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, the original complaint, and a written explanation of why he or she disagrees with the decision of the Executive Director. A written decision will be issued by the Board or his/her designee as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than five (5) working days after the next meeting of the Board. In its discretion, the Board may delegate any such review to a Committee of the Board and hold a hearing where appropriate. Board members who are interested parties shall excuse themselves from the hearing if such members have a conflict of interest in the subject of the appeal.
- 5) Step Five: Appeal to the State Board of Education. If the aggrieved family remains dissatisfied after review by the Governing Board, he/she may appeal to the State Board of Education in accordance with O.C.G.A § 20-2-1160.

The Board will not address a grievance where resolution has not been exhausted through the appropriate steps above. Further, the Board generally will not address a grievance that is made anonymously, based on hearsay, or made on behalf of another family.

For any grievance presented to the Board, the Board may delegate review of the grievance to a member or members of the Board, legal counsel, or another designee at its discretion.

Sankofa Montessori may, at its discretion, notify individual school employees about grievances brought against them.



Employee Grievances

As is natural, there are times when disputes arise between employees or between an employee and the school administration. Consistent with the philosophy behind the Charter, it is expected that during any dispute, all employees will model the conflict resolution skills that they advance to Sankofa Montessori students. Should it become necessary, this procedure is intended to provide a simple, expeditious, and fair process for resolving employee complaints at the lowest possible level and with a minimum of conflict and formal proceedings.

No employee will be subject to reprisal as a result of filing a complaint under this procedure.

Scope of Complaint Procedure

Any current employee may file a complaint concerning his/her/their employment or the implementation of personnel policies. The complaint should be in writing, and every attempt should have been made to settle the issue with individual conversations before bringing a formal grievance.

Exclusions

This procedure may not be used to complain about the following:

1. Performance ratings contained in the employee's personnel evaluations
2. The employee's job performance
3. Termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of employee
4. Revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates to all certified employees

Employee Grievance Procedure

1. Step One: Informal Discussion. An employee having a grievance hereunder shall make a good-faith effort to resolve the matter through informal discussions with the individual(s) involved in the matter and/or with the employee's direct supervisor, within five (5) working days of the occurrence or cause of such matter.
2. Step Two: Administrative Review. If the matter cannot be resolved through informal discussion, the aggrieved employee may submit their complaint, in writing, to the Montessori Academic Specialist within ten (10) working days after the most recent event upon which the complaint is based. The written complaint should include identification of the problem, a description of the efforts undertaken to informally resolve the dispute, and a proposed resolution. The Montessori Academic Specialist will make every reasonable effort to schedule a meeting to occur within five (5) working days of receipt of the complaint with the Montessori Academic Specialist and any other person(s) whose actions or decisions give rise to the matter. At such meeting, each party will have the opportunity to be heard and to request relief. Within three (3) working days or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable, the Montessori Academic Specialist will issue a



written recommendation as to how the matter should be resolved. All parties present at the meeting shall receive copies of the written recommendation.

3. Step Three: Review by Executive Director. If the aggrieved employee remains dissatisfied after administrative review, the employee may, within ten (10) working days of receipt of the Montessori Academic Specialist's written recommendation, submit the complaint to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will meet with the employee to go over the complaint and discuss the matter with all parties involved. This meeting shall take place within ten (10) working days of the Executive Director's receipt of the complaint, or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable given the circumstances. The Executive Director shall make every reasonable effort to prepare a written decision within five (5) working days of the meeting with the employee. All parties present at the meeting shall receive copies of the written decision.
4. Step Four: Review by the Board or a Committee thereof. If the aggrieved employee remains dissatisfied after review by the Executive Director, the employee may appeal the Executive Director's decision by filing within ten (10) working days of the decision, with the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, the original complaint, and a written explanation of why he or she disagrees with the decision of the Executive Director. A written decision will be issued by the Board or his/her designee as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than five (5) working days after the next meeting of the Board. In its discretion, the Board may delegate any such review to a Committee of the Board and hold a hearing where appropriate. If a hearing is held, it will be in closed session to the extent permitted by law. Board members who are interested parties shall excuse themselves from the hearing if such members have a conflict of interest in the subject of the appeal.

2. WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Sankofa Montessori requires employees to observe high standards of professional and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Employees of Sankofa Montessori are expected to practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and are expected to comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

All employees of Sankofa Montessori are required to report any suspected violation of any law or regulation that applies to the School. No employee who in good faith reports a violation shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or any adverse employment consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the School prior to seeking resolution outside the School.



Anyone who reports a suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. It is a serious disciplinary offense to knowingly or maliciously make a report that is false and such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.