



Westside Atlanta Charter School: Divisive Concepts Complaint Resolution Process

The Westside Atlanta Charter School (“WACS”) supports and encourages an environment that fosters independent and critical thought, including the studying and teaching of issues which may be considered controversial or divisive. WACS students and teachers have the following rights:

1. To study and teach any controversial or divisive issue that has political, economic, or social significance in an age- and developmentally- appropriate manner.
2. To have free access to all relevant information, including the materials that circulate freely in the community.
3. To study under competent instruction in an atmosphere of freedom from actions based on bias or prejudice. To provide competent instruction, using sound professional judgment designed to support standards-based instruction, in an atmosphere free from actions based on bias and prejudice.
4. To form and express opinions on controversial or divisive issues without fear of retaliation.

Curricula and training programs implemented in our school shall encourage employees and students to practice tolerance and mutual respect and to refrain from judging or discriminating against others based on race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry or any legally protected status.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed or applied to:

1. Inhibit or violate the rights protected by the Constitutions of Georgia and the United States of America or undermine intellectual freedom and free expression;
2. Infringe upon the intellectual vitality of students and employees;
3. Prohibit the Board, system or a school from promoting concepts such as tolerance, mutual respect, cultural sensitivity, or cultural competency; provided, however, that such efforts do not conflict with the requirements of this policy and applicable laws;
4. Prohibit a school administrator, teacher, other school personnel, or an individual facilitating a training program from responding in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs to questions regarding specific controversial issues or concepts raised by students, school community members, or participants in a training program;

5. Prohibit the discussion of controversial issues or concepts, as part of a larger course of instruction, in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs;
6. Prohibit the full and rigorous implementation of curricula, or elements of a curriculum, that are required as part of advanced placement, international baccalaureate, or dual enrollment coursework; provided, however, that such implementation is done in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs;
7. Prohibit the use of curricula that addresses the topics of slavery, racial oppression, racial segregation, or racial discrimination, including topics relating to the enactment and enforcement of laws resulting in racial oppression, segregation, and discrimination in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs;
8. Create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, by any party against the District, Board or the WACS, departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees, agents, or any other personnel affiliated with the District or the Board.

Complaint Resolution Process

The Westside Atlanta Charter School hereby adopts this complaint resolution policy to address complaints alleging violations of this policy.

A. A response will be provided to a complaint made by:

1. The parent or guardian of the WACS student;
2. A student who has reached the age of majority or is a lawfully emancipated minor and who is enrolled at WACS where the alleged violation occurred; or
3. An individual employed as a school administrator, teacher, or other school personnel at the WACS where the alleged violation occurred;

B. The complaint shall first be submitted in writing to the Administration at the WACS where the alleged violation occurred;

C. The complaint shall provide a reasonably detailed description of the alleged violation;

D. Timetable for complaint resolution

1. Within five school days of receiving such written complaint, the school

- Executive Director or a designee of the WACS school administration will review the complaint and take reasonable steps to investigate the allegations in the complaint;
2. Within ten school days of receiving the complaint, unless another schedule is mutually agreed to by the complainant and the school Executive Director or WACS school administration designee, the school Executive Director or such designee will confer with the complainant and inform the complainant whether a violation occurred, in whole or in part, and, if such a violation was found to have occurred, what remedial steps have been or will be taken; provided, however, that the confidentiality of student or personnel information shall not be violated; and,
 3. Following such conference, within three school days of a request by the complainant, the school Executive Director or WACS administration designee will provide to the complainant a written summary of the findings of the investigation and a statement of remedial measures, if any; provided, however, that such written response shall not disclose any confidential student or personnel information.
 4. The determinations shall be reviewed by the Superintendent or his or her designee within ten school days of receiving a written request for such review by the complainant addressed to the Superintendent, provided, however, that confidential student or personnel matters shall not be subject to review
 - a. In reviewing the decision, the Superintendent shall review the original complaint filed by the complainant, any communication between the complainant and the Executive Director or WACS designee from the time the complaint is filed until the time of the review that is related to the complaint, and any statement in writing submitted to the Superintendent in connection with the review by either the complainant or the Executive Director or WACS designee by a date set by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall have the right, but not the obligation, to hear from the complainant and the Executive Director or WACS designee or to request further information from either.
 - b. The Superintendent's decision shall be subject to review by the Board of Education as provided in Code Section 20-2-1160; provided, however, that confidential student or personnel matters shall not be subject to review;
 5. When the Board has made a decision, it shall be binding on the parties; provided, however, that the parties shall be notified in writing of the decision and of their right to appeal the decision to the State Board of Education and of the procedures and requirements for such an appeal as set forth in Georgia law.
 6. Any individual described in (A) above, shall have the right at any time, including prior to filing a complaint, to request, in writing, from the Superintendent or the WACS administration nonconfidential records which he or she reasonably believes may substantiate a complaint under this policy. Such records shall be produced for inspection

within a reasonable amount of time not to exceed three school days of receipt of the request. If some, but not all, of the records are available within three school days, the records that are available shall be made available, and the requester shall be provided a description of the records which are unavailable and a timeline for when those records will be available. These records shall be provided as soon as practicable, but in no case later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the request.

7. If a parent's request described in subsection (6) is denied or the records not produced within thirty (30) days, the parent may appeal the denial or failure to the Board which must place the appeal on the agenda for the next public meeting. If it is too late for such appeal to appear on the next meeting's agenda, the appeal must be included on the agenda for the subsequent meeting.

Policy Reference Disclaimer:

These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.