

## **Introduction and Values**

The Exploris School seeks to promote harmony among its employees, faculty, students, and parents and to encourage equitable solutions to problems arising among them. The School believes that most concerns and differences are best addressed through open and honest communication conducted in an informal, respectful, and civil manner and that effective resolution depends on direct, prompt and constructive dialogue.

The following procedures are adopted to meet these goals.

NOTE See Parent Handbook: Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

## **Grievance Committee Structure and Rules**

**Composition of the Grievance Committee** – The Grievance Committee shall consist of no fewer than three members of the Board of Directors, appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and confirmed by a vote of the full Board. One member of the Grievance Committee shall be designated by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors to serve as the Chairperson of the Committee.

**Parent Liaison** – One member of the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and confirmed by a vote of the full Board to serve as Parent Liaison. This individual shall not sit on the Grievance Committee. His or her primary role will be to help parents understand the grievance procedures and to provide process guidance to aggrieved parents. Parents who approach other members of the Board of Directors with grievances will be referred to the Parent Liaison.

**Training** – On an annual basis, all members of the Grievance Committee and the Parent Liaison will receive training provided by an attorney or other qualified individual with regard to confidentiality, impartiality, and other topics relevant to effective execution of their duties.

**Timelines** – Failure of a parent or employee to comply with the procedural timelines listed below may result in denial of a grievance request. Extensions in timelines may be granted if the relevant decisionmaker determines there is a reasonable need for such extension. Similarly, the timelines for actions to be taken by school personnel or board members may be extended, with notice to the aggrieved party, when there is a reasonable need for extension or extension is in the best interest of an effective process.

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**Forms** – The Executive Director or Board may develop one or more grievance forms to facilitate and document the various steps of the grievance process.

### Parent Grievance Procedures

**The Board recognizes that effective school governance requires that the primary responsibility for issues involving student discipline, curriculum, assessment and promotion and other day-to-day decisions regarding school management lies with the faculty, staff and Executive Director of the School and these individuals are best suited to resolve conflicts that arise with respect to these issues. The Board has the authority to appoint, employ, and remove the Executive Director, but primary responsibility and authority over faculty, staff and volunteer organizations of the School are vested in the Executive Director. The Board, therefore, will exercise any authority in this policy conservatively and narrowly so as not to usurp the authority granted to the Executive Director.**

**Informal Procedures:** A parent should first attempt to resolve any grievance through discussion with the relevant teacher(s) or other involved persons. If the parent's concern is not adequately addressed through an informal discussion with the teacher and/or staff involved, the parent should next attempt to resolve the grievance with the appropriate supervisor, if applicable. If a grievance cannot be resolved in an informal manner, the parent may initiate a formal grievance procedure.

**Formal Grievance Procedure:** In instances where informal means are ineffective or otherwise not feasible, the School offers these more formal grievance procedures. Grievance proceedings and information shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent possible and permitted by law. A parent grievance is a formal written claim by a parent or group of parents identifying the concern, identifying the individual or group's resolution attempts, and identifying any law, policy, or practice that is implicated by the concern. No one shall retaliate against a parent who files a grievance under this policy (or against a student whose parent files a grievance) in good faith.

**Level One – Supervisor Request and Conference.** A parent may, by written request, seek a formal conference with the relevant supervisor to address an unresolved grievance.

The request shall succinctly describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, and shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation or law believed to have been violated, and shall provide other relevant information to help the supervisor adequately understand the nature of the grievance.

The request shall be filed within fifteen (15) business days of the most recent incident(s) or last informal attempt to resolve the grievance, provided that such attempt was made within ten (10) business days of the last incident.

Following receipt of the written request, the supervisor shall, whenever possible, conduct a conference with the aggrieved parent(s) within ten (10) days. Within five (5) business days following the conference,

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the supervisor will state in writing his or her decision with regard to the grievance and a copy will be given to the parent.

**Level Two** - Appeal to the Executive Director. If the grievance is not resolved, the parent(s) may appeal the supervisor's decision in writing to the Executive Director if the Executive Director was not involved in the Level One Conference.

The appeal must be made within five (5) business days following receipt of the supervisor's written Level One response to the grievant. The Executive Director will review the grievance and conduct an informal investigation as necessary.

The Executive Director shall issue a written response to the parent and the Level One supervisor/staff within ten (10) business days following receipt of the written appeal.

**Decisions of the Executive Director are final and not subject to further appeal, except in the following instances:**

**Decisions involving an alleged violation of a contractual right;**

**Decisions involving an alleged violation by the School of state or federal law; or**

**Decisions based on allegations of conduct by the Executive Director in violation of law or school policy.**

The Board of Directors, through its Grievance Committee, retains discretion to determine whether an alleged violation involves a "final" or "appealable" decision by the Executive Director. The Grievance Committee may consider all available evidence in the record established at the time of the decision and any other evidence it deems necessary for consideration. In addition, the Grievance Committee has the authority to grant a discretionary appeal in exceptional circumstances.

**Level Three** - Appeal to the Board Grievance Committee: Appeal of Rights and Discretionary Appeals. If a parent is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance at Level Two, the parent may, within five (5) business days of receiving notice of the decision of the Executive Director, submit a written request to the Grievance Committee Chairperson to appeal the Executive Director's decision and to request a formal hearing.

Within five (5) business days of receiving the written request for appeal, the Grievance Committee Chairperson shall issue a written notice to the parent and the Executive Director indicating whether the Executive Director's determination is "final" in nature or whether the Board, in its discretion or by right of appeal, shall grant a hearing. The notice shall also specify, if a hearing is granted, the time it will occur and guidelines by which it will be conducted

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When a hearing is granted, a panel of the Grievance Committee consisting of at least three people shall hear the grievance within ten (10) business days of the date the Chairperson's notice is issued to the parent.

The Grievance Committee panel may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the Executive Director. Following the hearing, the parent and Executive Director shall be informed in writing of the panel's decision within five (5) business days after the hearing, whenever feasible.

The decision of the Grievance Committee panel is final OR the decision of the Grievance Committee panel may be appealed to the full Board of Directors.

### Employee Grievance Procedures

**Informal Procedures:** A faculty or staff member (the "employee") should first attempt to resolve any concerns through discussion with his or her supervisor and/or other involved persons. If a concern cannot be resolved in such informal manner, the employee may initiate a formal grievance procedure.

**Formal Grievance Procedure:** In instances where informal means are ineffective or otherwise not feasible, the School offers these more formal grievance procedures. Grievance proceedings and information shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent feasible and permitted by law. An employee grievance is a formal written claim by an employee or group of employees identifying the concern, identifying the individual or group's resolution attempts, and identifying any law, policy, or practice that is implicated by the concern. No one shall retaliate against an employee who files a grievance under this policy in good faith.

**Level One – Supervisory Request and Conference.** An employee may, by written request, seek a formal conference with his or her immediate supervisor to address an unresolved grievance.

The request shall succinctly describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, and shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation or law believed to have been violated, and shall provide other relevant information to help the supervisor adequately understand the nature of the grievance.

The grievance shall be filed within fifteen (15) days of the incident(s) or the last informal attempt to resolve the grievance, provided that such attempt was made within ten (10) business days of the last incident.

Following receipt of the written request, the supervisor shall, if feasible, conduct a conference with the aggrieved employee within ten (10) business days of the written report. Within five (5) business days following the conference, the supervisor will state in writing his or her position on the grievance, and a copy will be given to the employee.

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**Level Two** - Appeal to the Executive Director. If the grievance is not resolved, the employee may appeal the supervisor's decision in writing to the Executive Director if the Executive Director was not involved in the Level One Conference.

The appeal must be made within five (5) business days following receipt of the supervisor's written Level One response to the employee. The Executive Director shall issue a written response to the parent and the Level One supervisor/staff within ten (10) business days following receipt of the written appeal.

**Decisions of the Executive Director are final and not subject to further appeal, except in the following instances:**

**Decisions involving an alleged violation of a contractual right;**

**Decisions involving an alleged violation by the School of state or federal law;**

**Decisions based on allegations of conduct by the Executive Director in violation of law or school policy;**  
**or**

**Decisions involving suspension without pay or dismissal of the employee.**

The Board retains discretion to determine whether an alleged violation involves a "final" or "appealable" decision by the Executive Director. The Board may consider all available evidence in the record established at the time of the decision and any other evidence it deems necessary for consideration. In addition, the Grievance Committee has the authority to grant a discretionary appeal in exceptional circumstances.

**Level Three** - Appeal to the Board: Appeals of Right and Discretionary Appeals. If an employee is not satisfied with the disposition of his or her grievance at Level Two or is subject to suspension without pay or dismissal by the Executive Director, the employee may, within five (5) business days of receiving notice from the Executive Director, submit a written request to the Grievance Committee Chairperson to appeal the Executive Director's decision and to request a formal hearing.

Within five (5) business days of receiving the written request for appeal, the Grievance Committee Chairperson shall issue a written notice to the employee and the Executive Director indicating whether the Executive Director's determination is "final" in nature or whether the Board, in its discretion or by right of appeal, shall grant a hearing. The notice shall also specify, if a hearing is granted, the time it will occur and guidelines by which it will be conducted.

When a hearing is granted, a panel of the Grievance Committee consisting of at least three people shall hear the grievance within ten (10) business days of the date the Chairperson's notice is issued to the employee.

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The decision of the Grievance Committee panel is final OR the decision of the Grievance Committee panel may be appealed to the full Board of Directors.

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