



### **Complaint Policy and Procedures**

#### **Introduction to NCHS Complaint Procedures**

Any individual or group may bring complaints to the NCHS Board of Trustees (the “Board”) alleging a violation of a term of NCHS’s charter, a provision of the NYS Charter Schools Act, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the school. This policy describes both the formal and informal complaint processes, corresponding to different types of alleged violations. Although any individual or group may bring a formal complaint, NCHS has established an informal complaint process to expeditiously resolve matters in question. Complaints that do not involve an alleged violation of NCHS charter or state or federal law should be addressed through the informal process described below.

#### **Informal Complaint Process**

Informal complaints are those such as problems with assigned teachers or classes, or issues with grades, promotion, or retention. Where appropriate, you may wish to use the informal approach, which may result in a more timely resolution of the issue and which is also suited to dealing with issues that do not involve a violation of the charter or law. Even issues involving a violation of the charter or law may be resolved informally, and you may wish to use this avenue before making a formal complaint. Using the informal process does not prevent you from using the formal complaint process later. Employee HR complaints should be directed to ADP, NCHS’s Professional Employer Organization (“PEO”).

Parents, guardians and caregivers are welcome to contact the student's advisor, class teacher, Chief Academic Officer (“CAO”) or other administrator from the school. All staff members are committed to responding promptly to parent/guardian/caregiver concerns. If an issue is not resolved promptly or satisfactorily, please contact the CEO to discuss further.

Parents/guardians/caregivers may also file a complaint in writing directly to the CEO who has been appointed by the Board of Trustees to review complaints. After reviewing the complaint, the CEO will respond in writing and may additionally respond in person or via telephone when appropriate based on the circumstances. If the issue is regarding the CEO, please direct complaints directly to the Board of Trustees.

If after working with the CEO, the issue is still unresolved, you may send your concern in writing to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will then investigate the concern and provide a written response within thirty (30) days. If you determine that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, you may present that complaint to the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) as a conduit to the New York State Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond (see below for the process to contact NYSED).



## Complaint Policy and Procedures

### **Formal Complaint Process**

The manner in which the NCHS Board of Trustees documents, manages, and responds to formal complaints is determined by the NYS Charter School Act § 2855(4), which established a three-phase complaint process. First, if an individual or a group has a complaint about the management or operation of NCHS or about a possible violation of the NCHS charter, or the NYS Charter School Law, the complainant may present the complaint in writing to the NCHS Board by letter or via email to [board@northsidechs.org](mailto:board@northsidechs.org). Complaints may be submitted to the Board at least one week prior to the regular Board meeting at which time the complaint will be officially addressed. A calendar of Board meetings can be found on the School's website. Complaints submitted less than one week prior to the next regular Board meeting will be addressed at the subsequent Board meeting.

Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regular meeting. Every effort will be made to respectfully address each matter to the satisfaction of the individual or group that presented the complaint. The Board, as necessary, may order the CEO, CAO, or other school administrator to investigate and/or act upon the complaint and submit a written report to the Board. The Board shall create a written response, with appropriate determinations and rationales, to every complaint submitted in writing.

Second, if the complainant believes the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may then appeal to the charter entity, the Board of Regents, using the process described below:

### **Bringing a Complaint to the Board of Regents**

The Board of Regents has delegated the authority to the Commissioner of Education to handle complaints brought to the Regents concerning charter schools. All complaints brought to the Board of Regents/Commissioner concerning charter schools must be submitted in writing to the State Education Department's Charter School Office, either via mail at:

Charter School Office, NYS Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234, or via email to: [charterschools@nysed.gov](mailto:charterschools@nysed.gov). The subject line of the email should read: Complaint: [Name of School].

The contents of the letter/email should include:

- A detailed statement of the complaint including the provision of the School's charter or law that you allege has been violated.
- What, if any, response you received from the School's board of trustees (and the School's Charter Entity in the case of schools not authorized by the Board of Regents).
- Copies of all relevant correspondence between you and the School and you and the Charter Entity if applicable. (You should maintain copies of all correspondence and materials for your own files.) What specific action or relief



## Complaint Policy and Procedures

you are seeking.

- Contact information for you – name, address, email address, telephone number.

### **Investigation of a Complaint brought to the Board of Regents**

The Charter School Office, on behalf of the Commissioner and the Board of Regents, will conduct any investigation that it determines necessary and appropriate regarding complaints that have been appropriately filed concerning charter schools.

This investigation may include contacting the School concerning the complaint, providing a copy of the complaint to the School, and requesting additional information or materials from you and/or the School. Upon completion of the investigation of a complaint brought to the Board of Regents, a decision will be issued by the Commissioner, which may include a remedial order as appropriate. A copy of the Commissioner's decision will be provided to you, the School and the Charter Entity as applicable.