

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL
INTERNAL COMPLAINT POLICY

When any member of the SYVCS community, including but not limited to, students, parents, or employees/independent contractors, have a complaint about a matter of school policy or procedure, concern over the actions of another community member, or a serious misunderstanding which develops between or among parties at Santa Ynez Valley Charter School, the following procedures are to be followed:

INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Informal concerns are complaints that represent activities or behaviors reflecting a need for directed communication among the parties, but that do not represent allegations of significant breaches or violations of school policy or procedure, and do not represent public safety issues, or personal endangerment to others.

1. If the complaint involves school personnel, the concerned party is to request a meeting with the school personnel to communicate and discuss their concerns. A scheduled appointment is necessary. The school personnel will schedule an appointment in a timely manner.
 - a. The meeting shall openly address the party's concern or complaint, will focus on seeking resolution, and shall be conducted without resorting to personal affronts to any party.

Any party who feels threatened, intimidated, or personally offended may terminate the meeting and pursue resolution through Step 3 of the Informal Complaint Procedure.

- b. Written documentation of the meeting shall be taken by school personnel, and the concerned party is to review, sign and date the writings, along with the school personnel, at the completion of the meeting. If the meeting is done by telephone, the concerned party will review, sign and date the documentation at their earliest convenience.
 - c. Copies of written documentation will be made available to all parties involved.
 - d. If the expressed concern(s) are resolved, a copy of the written documentation will be filed in the Director's Office.
2. In the event that the expressed concern is not resolved through Step 1 the student, parents, or school personnel will schedule a meeting of all parties with the Executive Director. The notes from the first meeting will be shared with the Executive Director in advance of this meeting, and the meeting will be scheduled for the first available time convenient to all parties. The expressed purpose of this meeting is to bring about a resolution to the concern or complaint in a timely non-adversarial fashion. If the concern

or complaint is not resolved, or in the event that the issues require further investigation or assessment, he/she may proceed to Step 3.

- a. Again, notes should be taken and will accompany the meeting notes as set forth in Step 1, with all parties present to review, sign and date any written documentation.
 - b. Copies of the written documentation will be made available to all parties involved.
 - c. If the expressed concern(s) are resolved, a copy of the written documentation will be filed in the Director's Office.
3. If no resolution is reached in Steps 1 and 2 of the Informal Complaint Procedure, the concerned party may file a Formal Complaint.

FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Formal Complaints represent serious allegations of improper activities or behaviors reflecting a need for the timely and direct intervention of the site Executive Director with all involved parties. Such Complaints would likely involve, but would not be limited to, allegations of significant breaches or violations of school policy or procedure, and any actions or behaviors that may, in any way, create a condition of public safety concern, the possibility of personal endangerment, or complaints not resolved through the Informal Complaint Procedure.

The following is the procedure for addressing a Formal Complaint:

1. A written Complaint is to be filed with the site Executive Director, by the concerned party. The Executive Director shall attempt to informally resolve the Complaint, when he/she feels that such informal resolution of the Complaint is both appropriate and in the best interest of the school and its community, within Five (5) Working Days from the time of the filing.
2. In the event that informal resolution of the Complaint is attempted but not successful, the Executive Director shall respond to the Complaint with written recommendations Fifteen (15) Working Days from the date of the initial filing.
3. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Executive Director's recommendations, within Five (5) Business Days, he/she may file his/her complaint in writing with the Board President. At the next Board Meeting, the Board may decide not to hear the complaint, in which case the Executive Director's recommendations are final. If the Board decides to hear the complaint, it will be placed on the next Board agenda.
 - a. If the Complaint is a matter of school policy or procedure, or clarification of an issue, it will be discussed in open session of the Board per the agenda.
 - b. If the Complaint is a personnel matter, including but not limited to considerations for disciplinary action of a staff member, student, or admonition of a parent or community member, the concerns will be shared in closed session of the Board with all concerned parties present.

4. At any time, during this process, the Executive Director may elect to refer the Complaint, at his/her sole discretion, to the Board for its consideration.
5. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, either party may, at their own expense, choose to pursue outside mediation, arbitration, or litigation as set forth below in the “Role of the Board”.

ROLE OF THE BOARD

1. Individual Board members do not have the authority to resolve complaints. However, Board members will, if requested by any party, listen to the concern or complaint of the party, but will not act independently of the protocol established above.
2. The decision of the Board is final
 - a. In the event that any party wishes to contest the decision of the Board, it is recommended that such contestation be through private mediation.
 - a. In the event that the conflict is not resolved through mediation, it is further recommended that all parties agree to submit their case to binding arbitration. The Board of SYVCS will assume no liability or cost in this event.

SYVCS DISPUTE RESOLUTION DOCTRINE

In any dispute or conflict, SYVCS protects its right to interpret school rules, guidelines, policies, and personnel issues fairly based on truth and justice. The ultimate goal is the child’s well-being and the provision of an optimal learning environment for all students.

Note:

Any health and/or safety issue may be taken directly to the Executive Director.

Complaints regarding the Executive Director may be taken directly to the Board President.

Any complaint alleging failure to comply with state and federal laws, and/or discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying should be resolved through the Uniform Complaint Policy.