

Year: 2023	
Policy Number: 3210	
Section:	
Community Relations	
x Administration	
Business Procedures	
Community Operations	
Personnel	
Students	
Instruction	

SUBJECT: COMPLAINT POLICY

Informal Complaints

Any individual or group can bring complaints to the Health Sciences Charter Schools administration at any time. Often, issues or complaints can be resolved informally at the school, and do not need to involve the formal complaint process described below. Where appropriate, you may wish to use this more 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 law or charter may be able to be resolved informally and you may wish to use this avenue before making a formal complaint. You are not required to use the informal process and using the informal process does not prevent you from using the formal complaint process later.

To make an informal complaint, follow the process below:

Complaints or inquiries concerning instruction, building management, academic concerns, discipline, or culture concerns are to be referred to the school representative in which the matter pertains, and directed to the appropriate level of response according to the following sequence:

- 1) Classroom Teacher
- 2) Department Head
- 3) Building Principal
- 4) Head of School

If the complaint is not resolved by the Head of School, the individual or group may bring the complaint to the Board of Trustees.

If the complaint is about the Head of School, the individual or group may bring the complaint directly to the Board of Trustees.

To contact the Board of Trustees, use the electronic form on the school's website at healthsciencescharterschool.org by going to the Our School menu and clicking on the [Complaints/Concerns option](#) or send US Mail to Health Sciences Charter School, Attn: Chair of the Board of Trustees, 1140 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York 14209.

The Board of Trustees shall investigate and respond to all complaints in a timely manner and shall serve as the appeals body for any complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved.

When submitting an informal complaint, include

- A detailed statement of the complaint
- What, if any, response you received to date
- What specific action or relief you are seeking
- Contact information for you - name, address, email address, telephone number

Formal Complaints

Any individual or group may bring complaints to the Health Sciences Charter School Board of Trustees. Section 2855(4) of the Charter Schools Act provides that any student, family member, staff member, individual or group may initiate complaints directly with a charter school's Board of Trustees ("charter school board") without going to school staff or

leadership as a first step alleging a violation of the Charter Schools Act, the charter school's charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the charter school. There are no deadlines to initiate filing a complaint with the Board of Trustees. Complaints may be submitted to the Board at least one week prior to the next regular Board meeting at which time the complaint will be officially addressed. 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 request the Head of School, the Building Principal, or another responsible party 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. Responses will be delivered in writing or via email within 30 days, or as soon as it is practicable thereafter.

The manner in which the Health Sciences Charter School Board of Trustees documents, manages, and responds to complaints is determined by the NYS Charter School Law Section 2855(4) which establishes a complaint process.

If an individual or a group has a complaint about the management or operation of Health Sciences Charter School or about a possible violation of the Health Sciences Charter School charter, or the NYS Charter School Law the complainant may present the complaint in writing to the Health Sciences Charter School Board. The complaint may be sent by using the electronic form on the school's website at healthsciencescharterschool.org via electronic form by going to the Our School menu and clicking on the [Complaints/Concerns option](#) or by mail to Health Sciences Charter School, Attn: Chair of the Board of Trustees, 1140 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York 14209.

The complainant should include the following details in the written complaint:

- A detailed statement of the complaint including the provision of the Health Sciences Charter School's charter or law that you allege has been violated.
- What, if any, response you received from Health Sciences Charter School.
- Copies of all relevant correspondence between you and Health Sciences Charter School.
- What specific action or relief you are seeking.
- Contact information for you - name, address, email address, and telephone number.

If the complainant believes the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may then appeal to the charter authorizer, the New York State Board of Regents (NYSED). Upon receiving such a complaint NYSED is required to investigate and respond.

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 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.
- Copies of all relevant correspondence between you and the School. You should maintain additional copies of all correspondence and materials for your own files.
- What specific action or relief you are seeking.
- Contact information for you - name, address, email address, and 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 and the School.

Supporting Procedures:

Staff Handbook

Related Laws, Regulations & Acts: Section 2855(4) of the Charter Schools Act

Adopted: 06/12/2014

Revised: 08/10/2023