

STUDENT CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS, AND GRIEVANCES

The Virtual Academy of Lafourche, recognizing that problems may arise at our sites, shall require student concerns, complaints or grievances to be registered with the site manager or designee.

Any student (parent or guardian) shall have the right to present a grievance when it is believed that a misapplication or misinterpretation of policy or violation of rights has resulted in harm to the student. The student (parent or guardian) shall be assured freedom from interference, discrimination, or reprisal when presenting a grievance in accordance with this policy.

All grievances shall be handled expeditiously and according to the following procedures:

A. Definitions

1. Grievance: A claim by a student or parent that he/she has suffered harm or injury by the interpretation, application, or violation of a school policy, a Charter School Board policy, a law, or constitutionally guaranteed rights. The term "grievance" does not include matters for which a method of review is prescribed by law or Charter School Board policy.

Any claim by an individual that there has been a violation of rights shall be a grievance and shall be resolved through the procedures set forth in this policy. With consent of the aggrieved students/parents involved, several individual grievances may be consolidated for consideration.

2. Aggrieved Student: The student who is making the claim. A parent or guardian may act on the behalf of the aggrieved student, and may initiate the grievance.
3. Respondent: Person or persons responsible at each level of the procedure for responding to the claim of the aggrieved student.
4. Days: School or working day.
5. Board: Virtual Academy of Lafourche Charter School Board.
6. Responsible Person: Person who allegedly caused harm or injury to the aggrieved student by misinterpretation, misapplication, or violation of a policy or guaranteed right.

B. Procedures

Grievances shall be processed as rapidly as possible. The number of days indicated at each level is a maximum, and every effort shall be made to expedite processing the grievance. As indicated below, grievances carried above the level of the school at which the student attends must be in writing. The response will also be in writing.

INFORMAL LEVEL: Any student, or parent, with a complaint or grievance must first request redress orally with his/her site manager. Within ten (10) days, the site manager shall render an oral decision. At that time, the student and/or parent will be informed about the requirements outlined in this policy.

****NOTE**** If the site manager is the responsible person against whom the grievance is made, the process begins at Level One.

LEVEL ONE: In the event the aggrieved student/parent is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance at the informal level, or if no decision is rendered within ten (10) days after presentation of the grievance, the aggrieved student/parent may elevate the grievance to the main support site supervisor exercising academic control over the school. The grievance must be in writing and specify:

1. the nature of the grievance
2. the nature or extent of the injury, loss, or inconvenience
3. the results of previous discussions and/or decisions
4. the dissatisfaction with decisions previously rendered

LEVEL TWO: Should the aggrieved student/parent be dissatisfied with the disposition of the grievance at level one, or if no decision has been rendered by the main support site administrator within ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the grievance, the student/parent may elevate the grievance to the Director. The same type information required at level one shall be submitted in writing. The Director may meet with the parties in interest and/or appoint a disinterested party to conduct a formal investigation. In any event, the Director must render a decision on the grievance within fifteen (15) days from date of receipt.

LEVEL THREE: If the aggrieved student/parent is not satisfied with the decision of the Director, or if no decision is rendered within fifteen (15) days from receipt of the grievance by the Director, the aggrieved student/parent may request, in writing, that the Director place the grievance on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Charter Board. Such written request must include the same information called for at previous levels, and copies of all decisions previously rendered in connection with the grievance. The request for a hearing before the Board must be made no later than ten (10) days after receipt by the aggrieved student/parent of the Director's decision or if no decision was rendered, no more than ten (10) days following the last date on which the Director could have rendered such decision.

The hearing by the Board may be conducted as informal as possible, and all parties in interest shall be given the opportunity to present evidence in support of their positions. After hearing from all parties that desire to be heard, the Board shall render its decision on the merits of the grievance at the Board meeting or a subsequent Board meeting.

C. General

1. The deadline for submission of a grievance is not later than thirty (30) days after the last day of the school year during which the alleged grievance occurred.
2. A grievance may be withdrawn at any level without prejudice or record. Additionally, there shall be no recrimination against a student because a grievance has been submitted.
3. The grievance will be adjudged at each level on the specific issues raised in the original grievance. The parties in interest will not be allowed to expand or add issues during the grievance procedure, except to the extent necessary to respond to administrative decisions made along the way.
4. Failure by the aggrieved student/parent to meet the timelines and requirements of this policy may result in dismissal of the grievance. Failure by the respondents to meet timelines and requirements of this policy shall allow the aggrieved student/parent, at his/her option, to proceed to the next level.
5. Any aggrieved student/parent shall have the right to present his/her own grievance or may designate a representative to appear with him/her at any level of the procedure.