

GreenWood Charter School

Policy Number: 108- Communication Policy

Policy Section: 100

POLICY TITLE: Communication Policy

Revision History

Effective Date	Action Date	Revised
May 20, 2015	New Policy	New Policy
		May 18, 2016

Board Policy Sections:

- School Board 000 series
- Administration 100 series
- Instruction 200 series
- Student Services 300 series
- Staff policies 400 series
- Business and Operations policies 500 series
- Community 600 series

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1. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of this document is to outline a set of procedures for members of the GreenWood community to effectively communicate in such a way as to resolve conflict, build relational trust and improve the services of GreenWood Charter School.

As a school based on democratic principles, GreenWood Charter School is committed to keeping lines of communication open for all members of its community (students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, and board members). However, for such communication to be effective, the communicator must appreciate that there are already existing lines of responsibility and decision-making in the school. Effective communication respects and leverages those lines of responsibility and decision-making.

GreenWood Charter School does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients.

GreenWood Charter School is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate and will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant on the bases of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

In any group of two or more, conflict is inevitable. We are committed to addressing conflict in a respectful and direct manner. We are all different and we must work to communicate well with each other respectfully and with kindness. Each member of our GreenWood community must take responsibility for communicating his/her concerns and for listening to others with an open heart and hope of understanding. We should remember to ask ourselves if we are looking for blame or looking for solutions. This will lead to a healthy resolution of differences.

Generally speaking, it is expected that questions and problems can be satisfactorily resolved through informal discussion with the person with whom there is a disagreement or problem and that person should always be the first contact. Steps beyond the informal discussions are outlined below and should be followed until resolution is reached. Goal: To resolve questions and problems as soon as possible. • • School Concerns: If the school finds that the student or the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not in compliance with the Grow Commitments, the school will take the following actions in sequence as needed: 1. Notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) in person or by telephone that the school has concerns regarding compliance with the Grow Commitments. The school and the parent(s)/ guardian(s) will agree upon a plan to come into

compliance and establish a time frame for evaluation. 2. Send a Non-Compliance Notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) if the school continues to have concerns about compliance with the Partnership Agreement. Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) will be asked to attend a conference with the School Director to discuss a plan for compliance. 3. At the School Director's discretion, the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) may be referred to the school's Ombudsman.

2. POLICY

Members of the GreenWood community are entitled to offer suggestions, complaints, comments or concerns regarding policies, procedures, and practices at the school. The most effective line of communication may differ depending on one's role as a parent, teacher, student, or board member. Any grievance at the school will fall into one of three primary categories:

- (1) Complaints about a student, the classroom experience, or with a teacher.
- (2) Complaints or concerns about a school-wide policy or administration.
- (3) Complaints or concerns about a parent or community member involved with the school.

Students: As part of their education, students in the school should feel encouraged to involve themselves in its governance. Beyond talking to the teacher, administrator, or staff directly responsible for the issue, a student can also discuss his or her suggestion, complaint, comment or concern with the Student Government and have that body support the issue. If the issue is accepted by Student Government, then a representative of the body may request time from the School Director to address the issue. *Students who are suspended or expelled from school may also appeal to the Board of Directors.*

Parents: Many parents choose a charter school for their children in order to be involved in school governance. Beyond talking directly to the teacher, administrator, or staff responsible for the issue, a parent can also discuss his or her suggestion, complaint, comment, or concern with the School Director.

However, parental perspective on governance should be kept distinct from the students' and teachers' perspectives, and parents should NOT marshal students or teachers in support of a parent issue. Where a grievance involves an issue arising in the classroom, parents should first seek to resolve the issue with the classroom teacher.

If resolution with the teacher is not feasible or the grievance involves a school-wide policy or another parent at the school, the parent pursuing the grievance should seek to resolve the issue with the School Director. The grievance should be acknowledged via written response within 10 business days. For any grievance presented to the Governance Crew, a response via written letter will be sent within (30) thirty days of receipt of the grievance.

Teachers: Teachers are central in the democratic process and open communication policy at GreenWood. The best line of communication for a teacher to express a suggestion, complaint,

comment or concern is to bring that concern to whom they have the concern. If not addressed to resolution, the teacher should bring their concern to a member of the Leadership Team or Administrator responsible for the issue.

Contracts must remain private communication between the teacher and the School Director. Disputes can be reported directly or anonymously (by way of the Mediator) to members of the Governance Crew. *A teacher perspective on school issues should be kept distinct from those of parents and students, and teachers should NOT marshal students or parents in support of their issue.*

Resolution: If resolution with the School Director is not feasible or efforts to resolve the issue have been exhausted, then the parent should bring the grievance to the attention of the Mediator. The grievance should be acknowledged via written response within 10 business days.

Once all efforts to resolve a grievance have been exhausted with the school's staff and leadership, then a parent may bring a grievance to the attention of the Governance Crew as follows:

- Any grievances should be made in writing. This allows all parties involved to work from a consistent body of information.
- Submission may be made by this form. Generally, the Governance Crew will not address a grievance that is made anonymously, based on hearsay, or made on behalf of another family.
- Generally, the Board will not address a grievance where resolution has not been exhausted through the teachers, staff, School Director, or Governance Crew.
- Generally, the Board will not address specific grievances about the performance of an individual school employee in a public meeting. Any such grievances brought at a public meeting will be taken under advisement by the Board and responded to at a later time.
- The Board may, at its discretion, notify individual school employees through the School Director about grievances brought against them. Parents may, however, request that they not be personally identified as the party bringing the grievance.