

PVCICS IB Complaint Procedure

It is the policy of the PVCICS Board of Trustees that all complaints should be resolved as close to their source as possible. All members of the school community, and all outside parties involved in a dispute are encouraged to deal directly with the other parties involved. In general, any complaint should only move to a higher level of authority after direct communication between those initially involved has failed to produce a resolution.

The PVCICS Board further holds that any party with a valid complaint should be able to find satisfaction in its resolution. All members of the school community will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to reach a solution that is acceptable to all parties involved.

Authority and Role of the Grievance Committee:

The role of the Grievance Committee is to review a complaint that has not been resolved at the staff or administrative levels, and to provide mediation where appropriate. The committee must balance their duty to protect the interests of the Charter and the school with the concerns of the party filing the complaint. In general, it is the opinion of the Board of Trustees that the interests of the school and those of the individuals within should coincide if viewed from an appropriate distance. It is the job of this committee to find and take such a view. In cases where the parties fail to reconcile their differences through this process, the committee can make recommendations to any party for corrective action. In cases where the committee feels the scope of the dispute warrants an opinion of the full board, the committee will present the case to the board and request a vote.

To these ends, the Grievance Committee is authorized by the full board to review the conduct, relative to a specific complaint, of all employees and representatives of the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School. The Grievance Committee shall be authorized to make recommendations designed to resolve existing complaints (and to avoid future complaints) regarding staff conduct and educational policies. The Committee shall also have the authority to review the actions of any parent, student, or any other individual or group involved in a formal written complaint. The following steps will then be taken:

Step One: A parent, guardian, or other individuals or groups should contact those directly involved in the issue or decision. With issues relating to students, begin by speaking with the lead teacher. Communicate the complaint as clearly as possible and identify actions that will lead to a resolution of the issue. Work in a cooperative environment to resolve the complaint based upon the actions identified.

Step Two: If the complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction, speak with the Principal of the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School and develop a plan to resolve the issue. With issues relating to students, this plan may warrant input from the lead teacher. Any such plan may require review and revision during the process. The principal will set a timeframe for response, not to exceed thirty working days.

Step Three: If you feel your complaint remains unresolved after providing the principal time to respond, notify the chair of the Grievance Committee of the Board of Trustees. You will be asked to file a formal written report detailing the specifics of your complaint and requesting that the Grievance Committee review your case. Your report must clearly document the efforts made to comply with steps one and two of this process. Each party named in your complaint will receive a copy of your report. No anonymous complaints will be accepted by the Grievance Committee.

Step Four: Your written report will be taken to the Grievance Committee of the Board of Trustees. If the committee believes that more effort can reasonably be made to resolve the issue at the staff or administrative level, it will return the complaint to the appropriate level. If the committee finds that steps one and two of this process have been exhausted, it will schedule meetings with all parties involved in the complaint, including PVCICS staff requested by parties involved in the complaint. The purpose of these meetings will be to gather information, determine specific points of conflict, and identify possible solutions. The committee will provide an initial response to your report within ten working days.

Step Five: The Grievance Committee will review the conduct, decisions and policies that were involved in the complaint, and work with each party to develop a plan that will address the concerns of all those involved. The Grievance Committee may, if appropriate, schedule a meeting that includes all parties involved in the complaint and PVCICS staff requested by parties involved in the complaint in order to present the previously identified concerns and solutions, and work to mediate a resolution that is acceptable to all parties. The Grievance Committee will attempt to hold this meeting within thirty working days of receipt of the formal written complaint, but each complaint will warrant its own schedule. The committee will issue a formal written response to the complaint report at the end of this process and distribute it to all parties involved in the complaint, including PVCICS staff requested by parties involved in the complaint.

Step Six: The Grievance Committee can bring a complaint to the full Board of Trustees for a vote if the committee believes an issue concerns the conduct or welfare of the entire school.

Step Seven: A complaining party who feels their complaint has not been adequately addressed by the Grievance Committee or the Board of Trustees can submit the complaint in writing to the Commissioner of Education, who shall investigate such complaint and make a written response. The laws governing Massachusetts charter schools are M.G.L. c. 71 section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00. A copy of these laws will be provided by Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School upon request.

IB-Specific Complaint Procedure

All IB staff is trained in the subject they are teaching and has received additional training on Approaches to Teaching and Learning in the IB.

If a student or their legal guardian has a complaint or concern regarding the IB Program at PVCICS, they should take the following steps:

1. Speak to the staff member(s) directly and try to resolve the situation within a one-month period. Please make

your concern known as soon as possible.

2. Contact the IB Coordinator to set up an appointment to discuss the matter.
3. Follow up with the IB Coordinator to determine how the situation was addressed.
4. The IB Coordinator may involve the principal, counselor, and teaching staff involved.
5. If the situation is not resolved via the above steps, the Grievance Policy above will be implemented.
6. Certain concerns and grievances may go directly to the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Please see the link below.

Grievances Related to IB Results

If a student fails to earn the IB Diploma or feels that their score in a critical subject is not reflective of their performance, the following process will be implemented:

1. Contact the IB Coordinator to request a regrade. If the student does not earn their IB Diploma and they are within one point of the next grade, a regrade will be automatically initiated by the school with parent and student permission.
2. If the student is more than one point away from the next grade, parents may initiate a regrade and will have to pay the fee for this service. They must contact the IB Coordinator as soon as possible but no later than September 1 to make this request. Please be aware that a regrade does not guarantee that the grade will increase, and, in fact, it might decrease.

Link to IBO Complaints Procedure

(<https://www.ibo.org/contentassets/fab8cccf45b743c0a68de6f9ea989385/ib-complaints-procedure-nov-2018-en.pdf>).

Contacts:

IB Coordinator mmacpherson@pvcics.org

Principal kwang@pvcics.org

Director ralcorn@pvcics.org

Policy Review

This procedure is a living document that needs to be adjusted to the changing needs of the school. Consequently, it will be reviewed annually and communicated by the coordinator via the website.

Updated August 2024

**** End of Grievance Procedure ****