

Family, Community, and Staff Complaint Policy

Innova Girls Academy is committed to working positively with parents, families, staff, and community members to ensure that students are ready to be successful in college and work life. To that end, Innova Girls Academy is required to follow the terms of its charter and all applicable state and federal laws pertaining to charter schools.

If a parent, legal guardian, public or nonpublic school parent, agency, or other person believes that Innova Girls Academy has violated one or more (1) terms of its charter; and/or (2) provisions of the law pertaining to charter schools, s/he should immediately contact the school to discuss the concerns. Please see the Informal Complaint Procedure below. Additionally or alternatively, s/he may formally complain to the school and seek relief.

Informal Complaint Procedure

Innova Girls Academy encourages an open and inclusive environment where students, parents, guardians, and staff feel comfortable expressing their concerns. Through regular communication, Innova seeks to receive feedback and identify opportunities for improvement. As such, we encourage all Innova Girls Academy stakeholders to share complaints as they arise.

The school believes in resolving issues at the earliest stage possible. If an individual has a complaint, they are encouraged to first address it directly with the person involved, such as the teacher, staff member, or administrator. Many concerns can be resolved through open and honest conversations.

If the issue remains unresolved or if the individual feels uncomfortable addressing it directly with the person involved, they can contact the Head of School Operations or Academics. The Innova Girls Academy leadership team is available to listen, understand the stakeholders concerns, and work towards finding a satisfactory resolution.

Innova Girls Academy values feedback and continuous improvement. After the resolution of a complaint, the school encourages the individual to follow up to ensure that the matter has been adequately addressed. The feedback provided will help evaluate policies and practices and make any necessary adjustments.

If the issue remains unresolved after exhausting the above steps, the individual may escalate their complaint to a formal complaint process. Please see the following section of this policy for the Formal Complaint Procedure.

Formal Complaint Procedure

In order to file a formal complaint, the complainant should submit a written description of what occurred and which provision(s) of Innova Girls Academy's charter and/or law(s) were allegedly violated. The complaint should be sent to the Innova Girls Academy Head of School Operations, who shall, within 30 days, make a determination as to the efficacy of the complaint and

recommend/take appropriate action on behalf of the Board of Trustees. The Head of School Operations shall provide the Board of Trustees with a summary of the complaint and outcome.

If the complaint directly involves the Head of School Operations, or if the complainant would prefer to file the complaint directly with the Board of Trustees, the formal complaint shall be directed to the Board of Trustees Chairperson. Please see the Contact Information for the Board of Trustees listed at the end of this policy. The Board of Trustees Chairperson shall follow the same process as described above. The complainant shall be notified in writing of the determination and any action that Innova Girls Academy will take within 10 days of the determination.

In the event that the complainant disagrees with the determination and action, or after the above-outlined timeframe has expired, s/he may make a formal complaint to the New York State Board of Regents, which is Innova Girls Academy's charter authorizer. Thereafter, if s/he is unsatisfied with the Authorizer's response, s/he can complain to the New York State Education Department. Please see the contact information for the New York State Education Department at the end of this policy.

Complaints regarding the LEA's administration and implementation of its ESSA Title I Grant or Academic Intervention Services for students identified under Commissioner's Regulations Part 100 should be sent first to the Head of School Operations of the Innova Girls Academy Charter School. Innova Girls Academy has a 30 business day period in which to resolve a complaint.

If Innova Girls Academy fails to resolve the complaint within 30 business days, or fails to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complaint should be sent to the Title I School and Community Services Office, Room 368 EBA, New York State Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234. 137

The State Education Department will review complaints when the complaint pertains to:

- the State's administration of the Innova Girls Academy Title I Basic Grant, Migrant Education, or Neglected or Delinquent Program;
- an appeal from the decision of Innova Girls Academy regarding an action by Innova Girls Academy.

Appeals Process

If the complainant disagrees with the determination and action taken, they have the right to appeal the decision. The appeals process is as follows:

The complainant must submit a written appeal to the Board of Trustees within 10 days of receiving the written determination. The appeal should outline the reasons for disagreement with the decision and provide any additional information or evidence relevant to the complaint.

The Board of Trustees will review the appeal and conduct a thorough examination of the complaint, including the initial determination and any new evidence provided. The Board will

make a final decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal. The complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal and any actions to be taken.

If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of the appeal or if the outlined timeframe has expired without resolution, they may seek external resolution. The complainant may file a formal complaint with the New York State Board of Regents, Innova Girls Academy's charter authorizer. If further dissatisfaction persists, the complainant can escalate the complaint to the New York State Education Department. The contact information for the New York State Education Department and the Board of Trustees should be provided at the end of this policy for the convenience of the complainant.

Additional Information Related to the Complaint Process

Accessibility

Although it is our preference that Innova Girls Academy receive complaints from its parents, the community and its staff in writing, we understand that that may not always be possible. If the complainant has limitations which preclude s/he from putting her/his complaint in writing, s/he should inform the individual to whom they made the report to. The individual who received the complaint will then assist the complainant to put the complaint into written form.

Confidentiality

We respect the confidentiality and safety of all individuals who file a complaint about the school, or a circumstance which warrants such a complaint. We highly encourage complainants to disclose their name and contact information to the school when making a complaint so that the school may properly follow up with the complainant, collect any additional information and report back to the complainant about how the school has ameliorated the problem (if necessary or requested). Alternatively, complainants may file complaints anonymously.

Discrimination, Harassment, Etc.

If the nature of the complaint involves discrimination, harassment, bullying or sexual assault, there are other procedures and protocols that a parent/community member or staff member must follow. Please refer to the Sexual Harassment and Discrimination, Dignity Against All Students Act (DASA) Policy for those specific policies and procedures or call the Head of Schools with questions.

Relevant Contact Information

Innova Girls Academy Heads of School

Phone: (585) 201-8187

Email: leadership@innovagirlsacademy.org

Address: 546 Oxford St, Rochester, NY 14607

Innova Girls Academy Board of Trustees

Phone: (716) 238-1200

Email: board@innovagirlsacademy.org

Address: 546 Oxford St, Rochester, NY 14607

Charter Schools Office at New York State Department of Education

Phone: (518) 474-1762

Email: CharterSchools@nysed.gov

Address: 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234

Questions

Please contact the Head of Schools or another administrator at Innova Girls Academy with questions about our complaint policy or to whom complaints should be directed.