



## **Complaint Procedure for Parents**

*(May 2025)*

### **Purpose**

LEAD Public Schools is committed to resolving complaints and grievances promptly, equitably, and at the lowest administrative level, in compliance with Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.), Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) Policy 1.404, and Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (TPCSC) Policy 3.400. This policy covers general complaints (e.g., disagreements with staff or school policies) and complaints involving discrimination, harassment, or bullying, including sex-based harassment under Title IX. Complaints about personnel will be investigated fairly and confidentially, ensuring due process.

### **Goals**

- Establish a clear framework for addressing concerns.
- Ensure prompt resolution within defined timelines.
- Promote cooperative, professional, and respectful interactions.
- Resolve most concerns at the lowest administrative level.
- Comply with MNPS, TPCSC, and applicable laws (e.g., T.C.A., IDEA, ADA, Section 504, Title VI, Title IX).

### **General Complaint Procedures**

#### **• Step 1: Direct Conversation**

- Parents or students with a concern (e.g., disagreement with an instructor or policy) should request a meeting with the involved staff member verbally and in writing (e.g., email).
- The meeting will occur within five (5) school days, subject to mutual scheduling adjustments, aiming for informal resolution through dialogue.

#### **• Step 2: Fact-Finding and Possible Resolution**

- If unresolved, a meeting will be arranged with the parent, staff member, and an administrator (e.g., Dean of Instruction or School Director) within five (5) school days of Step 1.
- If resolution is not achieved, the parent must submit a signed, dated written statement to the administrator, including:

- \* Facts of the concern.
- \* Name of the involved staff member.
- \* Remedy sought.
- This step remains informal and verbal unless escalating to Step 3.

• **Step 3: Formal Process**

- Submit the written complaint to the Dean of Instruction. A meeting with the parent, staff member (and their representative, if desired), and Dean (or designee) will occur within ten (10) school days.
- The Dean or School Director will issue a written disposition within five (5) school days, including reasons, with copies to the Chief Academic Officer and, if appropriate, the staff member's personnel file.
- For TPCSC-authorized schools, dispositions involving legal violations (e.g., IDEA, Title IX) will be shared with the TPCSC.

• **Step 4: Governance Committee**

- If dissatisfied, submit a written request to the Governance Committee within five (5) school days of the Step 3 disposition.
- The issue will be addressed in executive session at the next Committee meeting, with only Committee members, the parent, and staff member (and representative, if applicable) present.
- A written disposition will be issued within five (5) school days.

• **Step 5: Board of Directors**

- If unresolved, submit a written request to the Board of Directors within five (5) school days of the Step 4 disposition.
- The issue will be addressed in executive session at the next Board meeting, with a final written disposition issued within five (5) school days.

## **Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Complaint Procedures**

• **Who May File:**

- Any student, employee, or person participating in LEAD Public Schools' programs or activities.
- For sex-based harassment under Title IX: A complainant (victim), their legal representative, or the Title IX Coordinator (Nicolas Frank, [Nicolas.Frank@leadpublicschools.org](mailto:Nicolas.Frank@leadpublicschools.org), (615) 806-6317).

• **Filing a Complaint:**

- If safe, inform the perpetrator that their conduct is offensive and must stop. – Report to the School Principal or Title IX Coordinator within ten (10) school days of the incident.
- Submit a formal, written complaint detailing the incident(s), the alleged harasser's identity, and supporting evidence.

• **Investigation Process:**

- The Principal or Title IX Coordinator will conduct a thorough investigation, involving only necessary parties, within fifteen (15) school days, unless extended by mutual agreement.

- The respondent will be informed of the allegations and the complainant's identity and may be placed on suspension/administrative leave.
- Interviews with witnesses and evidence review will be conducted confidentially.

• **Disciplinary Action:**

- If substantiated, the School Director will determine actions, such as:
  - Students: Suspension, expulsion, or other measures per the code of conduct.
  - Employees: Suspension, administrative leave, or termination.
  - Non-employees: Barring from facilities/events or law enforcement involvement.
- Sexual harassment constituting abuse under T.C.A. §37-1-602 will be reported to authorities.

• **Disposition and Appeals:**

- A written disposition will be provided within five (5) school days of investigation completion.
- Appeals follow Steps 4 and 5 above.

• **Supportive Measures:** Non-disciplinary services (e.g., counseling, schedule changes) will be offered to complainants and respondents, maintaining confidentiality where possible.

## **Escalation to Authorizers**

**TPCSC-Authorized Schools** (LEAD Neely's Bend, LEAD Southeast Elementary):

Complaints involving violations of law, charter agreements, special education, abuse, health/safety, or civil rights may be escalated to the TPCSC within 180 calendar days.

- Submit a written complaint with details, prior resolution attempts, and documentation.
- The TPCSC will respond within seven (7) business days and address the complaint within thirty (30) calendar days, potentially implementing interventions (e.g., corrective action, probation).

**MNPS-Authorized Schools** (LEAD Southeast Middle/High, LEAD Academy, LEAD Cameron):

- Unresolved complaints may be escalated to the MNPS Office of Family and Community Engagement within thirty (30) calendar days, per MNPS Policy 1.404.
- MNPS will respond within fifteen (15) school days, with appeals to the MNPS Board of Education.

## **Non-Retaliation**

LEAD Public Schools, MNPS, and TPCSC prohibit retaliation against individuals filing complaints or participating in investigations. Retaliation reports will be investigated promptly and may result in disciplinary action.

### **Additional Remedies**

Filing a complaint under this policy does not preclude pursuing legal or administrative remedies with the Tennessee Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, or law enforcement.

### **Annual Dissemination**

This policy will be disseminated annually to all LEAD Public Schools staff, students, and parents/guardians.