

Method Schools Board Policy 1030

Revised November 2021

Uniform Complaint Procedure Policy

The Board of Directors of Method Schools recognizes that it is responsible for complying with applicable laws and regulations governing educational programs.

This document contains rules and instructions about the filing, investigation and resolution of a Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) complaint regarding an alleged violation by a local educational agency of state laws or regulations governing educational programs, including allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

This policy outlines Method Schools' UCP and provides a comprehensive approach to resolution on any complaint. A complaint is a written and signed statement by a complainant alleging a violation of state laws or regulations, which may include an allegation of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying and charging pupil fees for participation in an educational activity. A complainant is any individual, including a person's duly authorized representative or an interested third party, public agency, or organization who files a written complaint alleging violation of state laws or regulations, including allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying and noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees. If the complainant is unable to put the complaint in writing, due to a disability or illiteracy, Method Schools shall assist the complainant in the filing of the complaint.

A pupil fee is a fee, deposit, or other charge imposed on pupils, or a pupil's parents or guardians, in violation of state codes and constitutional provisions which require educational activities to be provided free of charge to all pupils without regard to their families' ability or willingness to pay fees or request special waivers. Educational activities are those offered by a school, school district, charter school, or county office of education that constitute a fundamental part of education, including, but not limited to, curricular and extracurricular activities.

A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory, or is for credit.
- A security deposit, or other payment, that a pupil is required to make to obtain any school equipment or supplies.
- A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment, or clothes associated with an educational activity.

This document also applies to the filing of complaints which allege unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying against any protected group as identified under Education Code section 200 and 220 and Government Code section 11135, including those with actual or perceived characteristics such as age, ancestry, color, ethnic group identification, gender expression, gender identity, gender, disability, nationality, national origin, race or ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, in any program or activity conducted by a local agency, which is funded directly by, or that receives or benefits from any state financial assistance.

The following complaints shall be referred to other agencies for appropriate resolution and are not subject to our UCP process set forth in this document unless these procedures are made applicable by separate interagency agreements:

1. Allegations of child abuse shall be referred to County Dept. of Social Services (DSS), Protective Services Division or appropriate law enforcement
2. Health and safety complaints regarding a Child Development Program shall be referred to Dept. of Social Services for licensed facilities, and to the appropriate Child Development regional administrator for licensing-exempt facilities
3. Employment discrimination complaints shall be sent to the State Dept. of Fair Employment and Housing
4. Allegations of fraud shall be referred to the Legal, Audits and Compliance Branch in the California Department of Education.

The responsibilities of Method Schools

Method Schools has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state laws and regulations. We shall investigate complaints alleging failure to comply with applicable state laws and regulations and/or alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying and charging pupil fees for participation in an educational activity and seek to resolve those complaints in accordance with our UCP procedures.

In regards to complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees, if Method Schools finds merit in a complaint a remedy will be provided to all affected pupils, parents and guardians, that, where applicable, will include reasonable efforts by Method Schools to ensure full reimbursement to all affected pupils, parents and guardians. Our UCP policies shall ensure that complainants are protected from retaliation and that the identity of a complainant alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying remain confidential as appropriate.

The person responsible for receiving and investigating complaints and ensuring our compliance with state laws and regulations is:

Method Schools
ATTN: Jessica Spallino, CEO (jessica@methodschools.org)
38750 Sky Canyon Dr., Suite B
Murrieta, CA
92563

We ensure that the person above, who is responsible for compliance and/or investigations, is knowledgeable about the laws/programs that he/she is assigned to investigate. Complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees are filed with a principal of a school.

We shall annually notify in writing our pupils, employees, parents or guardians of our pupils, the district advisory committee, school advisory committees, appropriate private school officials or representatives, and other interested parties of our UCP process regarding an alleged violation by a local agency or state law or regulations governing educational programs, including allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying and noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees. The UCP Annual Notice will be disseminated to all of the six required groups each year and will include information on how to appeal to the CDE. An appeal is a request made in writing to a level higher than the original reviewing level by an aggrieved party requesting reconsideration or a reinvestigation of the lower adjudicating body's decision. Our UCP Annual Notice shall also advise the recipient of any civil law remedies that may be available under state discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying laws, if applicable, and of the appeal pursuant to Education Code section 262.3. Our UCP Annual Notice shall be in English and in the primary language, pursuant to section 48985 of the Education Code, or mode of communication of the recipient of the notice.

A copy of this UCP complaint policies and procedures document shall be available free of charge.

Filing a complaint with Method Schools

Emergency or urgent facilities conditions that pose a threat to the health or safety of pupils or staff, and teacher vacancies or misassignments, and complaints that allege discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying, any individual, public agency or organization may file a written complaint with our district superintendent or his or her designee alleging a matter which, if true, would constitute a violation by our LEA of - or state law or regulation governing a program. A complaint of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees may be filed with the principal of a school under the Uniform Complaint Procedures and may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees.

An investigation of alleged unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying shall be initiated by filing a complaint no later than six months from the date the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying occurred, or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying. The time for filing may be extended in writing by our district superintendent or his or her designee, upon written request by the complainant setting forth the reasons for the extension. The period for filing may be extended by our superintendent or his or her designee for good cause for a period not to exceed 90 calendar days following the expiration of the six-month time period. Our superintendent shall respond immediately upon a receipt of a request for extension.

The complaint shall be filed by one who alleges that he or she has personally suffered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying or by one who believes an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying prohibited by this part.

An investigation of a discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying complaint shall be conducted in a manner that protects confidentiality of the parties and maintains the integrity of the process.

In the case that a complaint is filed against the CEO, the compliance officer for that case shall be the President of the Board of Directors

Within 60 calendar days from the date of the receipt of the complaint, we shall conduct and complete an investigation of the complaint in accordance with our UCP policies and procedures and prepare a written Decision; also known as a final report. This time period may be extended by written agreement of the complainant.

The investigation shall include an opportunity for the complainant, or the complainant's representative, or both, to present the complaint(s) and evidence or information leading to evidence to support the allegations of non-compliance with state laws and/or regulations. Refusal by the complainant to provide the investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, or to otherwise fail or refuse to cooperate in the investigation or engage in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegations.

Refusal by Method Schools to provide the investigator with access to records and/or other information related to the allegation in the complaint, or to otherwise fail or refuse to cooperate in the investigation or engage in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in a finding based on evidence collected that a violation has occurred and may result in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant.

We shall issue a Decision based on the evidence. The Decision shall be in writing and sent to the complainant within 60 calendar days from receipt of the complaint by the local educational agency. The Decision should contain:

- (i) the findings of fact based on the evidence gathered,
- (ii) conclusion of law,
- (iii) disposition of the complaint,
- (iv) the rationale for such disposition,
- (v) corrective actions, if any are warranted,
- (vi) notice of the complainant's right to appeal our LEA Decision to the CDE, and (vii) procedures to be followed for initiating an appeal to the CDE.
- (vii) For unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying complaints arising under federal laws such complaint may be made at any time to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

Appealing to the Board of Directors

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the administrative designee's decision he/she may, within five days, file his/her complaint in writing with the 60-day time limit within which the complaint must be answered. The Board may decide not to hear the complaint, in which case the decision of the compliance officer shall be the Charter's final written decision. If the Board hears the complaint, the compliance officer shall send the Board's decision to the complainant within 60 calendar days of the Charter's initially receiving the complaint or within an extended time period that has been specified in a written agreement with the complainant.

Nothing in this document shall prohibit anyone involved in the complaint from utilizing alternative methods to resolve the allegations, such as mediation. Nor are we prohibited from resolving complaints prior to the formal filing of a written complaint. Mediation is a problem solving activity whereby a third party assists the parties to the dispute in resolving the complaint.

Method Schools reserves the right to modify locations for receipt of forms as necessary.

Board Approval Date: 11/16/2021

Uniform Complaint Procedure Form

Last Name:

First Name:

Student Name (if applicable):

Address:

Phone:

Name of Charter of Alleged Violation:

For allegation(s) of noncompliance, please mark list area of concern below:

For allegation(s) of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying, please mark the basis of the unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying described in your complaint, if applicable:

- Age
- Ancestry
- Color
- Disability (Mental or Physical)
- Ethnic Group Identification
- Gender / Gender Expression / Gender Identity
- National Origin
- Race
- Religion
- Sex (Actual or Perceived)
- Sexual Orientation (Actual or Perceived)
- Based on association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics

Description of Complaint (attach additional pages if needed):

Please include all important information such as location, names, dates, who was present, and to whom it was reported that may be helpful to the complaint investigator. Have you discussed your complaint or brought your complaint to any Method Schools personnel? If you have, who have you discussed this with, and what was the result? Please provide copies of any documentation that may be relevant or supportive of your complaint.

Signature:

Date:

