

Conflict Resolution Policy

(Approved by CC 6-28-16; Reviewed/Revised 4/28/26 hms)

Intention

The intent of this document is to detail the path to resolution when a difference of opinion occurs among members of our community. The foundation of this policy is supported by fundamental agreements and guidelines for healthy communication and interaction. The overall purpose of this policy is to perpetuate a climate of collegiality, mutual trust, and respect by resolving differences in a timely, impartial, and equitable manner.

Fundamental Agreements

- We demonstrate respect, in what we say and how we say it.
- We focus on issues, not individuals.
- We seek to find solutions understanding that the children are always the focus of what we do.
- We keep an open mind.
- We are positive and flexible and strive to presume positive intent from others.
- We honor confidentiality of information given in confidence, including group meetings.

Guidelines

- Communicate face-to-face.
- Refrain from third party conversation (e.g. gossip).
- Respect time and priorities of others in arranging conversations.
- Use email and texting thoughtfully, keeping our fundamental agreements in mind.
- Keep conflicts in the adult realm and do not involve children.

Definition of Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a normal and natural occurrence among people working together. These procedures are intended to deal with problems that are essentially interpersonal in nature; problems that are not interpersonal are normally referred to the appropriate committee and/or to school administration.

Resolution can take a variety of forms, including:

- reaching mutual understanding
- recognizing need for further work
- agreeing to disagree, and agreeing, nonetheless, to treat each other with respect.

Basic Principle

Ideally, disagreements are resolved at the lowest level possible. It is expected that all parties in conflict, including teachers, parents, Executive Director, or students, in any combination, will adhere to the resolution procedure as outlined in this document.

Steps of Resolution

Step #1: Direct Resolution

The Direct Resolution consists of a face-to-face meeting or meetings between the parties involved. Direct communication, with respect and sensitivity, is the groundwork for all conflict resolution. Speaking to the person directly is the best way to clear any conflict or challenge. A clarifying question is often all that is needed to solve an issue.

A face-to-face conversation offers the opportunity for mutual understanding that does not exist in emails or text messages. It supports active listening skills, brings clarity to communication as less is left open for interpretation, and provides the “give-and-take” that can aid resolution.

If a request for Direct Resolution meeting is made to an SBS employee, the request will be responded to within two working days. Every effort will be made to bring people together for the meeting within two weeks of receiving the request (sooner if possible).

If an attempt at Direct Resolution has been made and resolution as defined in the Definition of Conflict Resolution section of this policy has not been reached, Administrative Resolution (Step #2) can be activated.

Step # 2: Administrative Resolution

If the matter is not resolved through Direct Resolution, the Administrative Resolution process may be requested. This consists of a meeting between the parties involved facilitated by the school Executive Director or designee. Once the Administrative Resolution process has been requested, Administration will acknowledge the request for assistance within two working days by phone, email, or in writing to schedule a meeting time. Every effort will be made to bring people together for the meeting within two weeks of receiving the request (sooner if possible).

Minutes will be taken at this meeting and copies of the minutes will be provided to all people present at the meeting. Included in the minutes will be the next steps in the process. The parties will be asked to sign a copy of the minutes to indicate that they are a true reflection of the conversation.

If attempts at Direct Resolution and Administrative Resolution have been made, and resolution as defined in the Definition of Conflict Resolution section of this policy has not been reached, the conflict can move to Mediated Resolution (Step#3).

Step 3: Mediated Resolution

The Mediated Resolution process consists of a meeting or meetings between the parties involved with a neutral third party in attendance. A member of the school community may serve as mediator with the express approval of all parties involved. If necessary, the mediator may be a trained professional without any direct connection to the school. It is expected that the parties involved

will commit in good faith to the process of Mediated Resolution and will strive for a mediated resolution.

All requests for Mediated Resolution must be made in writing. Included on this form shall be a description of the conflict, as clear and simple as possible, with relevant background to the dispute, efforts already taken to resolve the matter, why previous steps were not considered successful and the additional input required to achieve resolution. If a request for Mediated Resolution meeting is made, the request will be responded to within two working days. Every effort will be made to bring people together for the meeting within two weeks of receiving the request (sooner if possible).

Minutes will be taken at this meeting and copies of the minutes will be provided to all people present at the meeting. Included in the minutes will be the next steps in the process. The parties will be asked to sign a copy of the minutes to indicate that they are a true reflection of the conversation.

Action Plan

Positive improvements can only come about if we follow through on the commitments we make during the meetings to resolve differences. The meeting facilitator is responsible for documenting the action plan for the meeting (noted in the minutes), citing the names of responsible parties for following through on the issue, plans, and strategies that arise from the meetings, as well as deadlines and a date for a follow-up meeting if desired. Any participant may raise a concern about follow through with the school administration if they believe these agreements are not being put into action.

Student Advocacy

If the needs of students are not being met, there is the option of convening a Student Success Team (SST). The Student Success Team meetings are overseen by the school's Educational Support Specialist and also include the parents, the teacher, and a representative of the SBS Administration. Parents can initiate this group by written request. Once established, this group is tasked with assisting the student, by creating an action plan for success.

Administrative Concerns

For concerns involving the Executive Director, please contact the Charter Council chair or co-chair. Contact information can be found on the SBS website.

Exceptions

This process is designed to moderate the effects of and to assist in the resolution of conflicts that may arise within the school community. In the case of conflicts involving students, every effort will be made to resolve the conflict at steps 1 or 2.

Complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be addressed per the [Uniform Complaint Procedures \(UCP\) Policy](#), its requirements, and guidelines.