



SECTION: School, Community, and Home Relations
CEC Informal Complaint & Grievance Policy
Adopted 9/2021
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CEC Informal Complaint & Grievance Policy

Purpose

Colorado Early Colleges (CEC) is committed to resolving concerns promptly, fairly, and at the most appropriate level. Individuals are encouraged to raise concerns as soon as possible so they can be addressed in a timely and equitable manner. CEC prohibits retaliation against any individual who raises a concern or participates in the complaint or grievance process in good faith.

CEC complies with all applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws, including Title IX and Section 504. Complaints involving discrimination, harassment, or retaliation will be addressed through appropriate compliance procedures. CEC will provide reasonable accommodations, including language assistance, to support individuals participating in the grievance process. Nothing in this policy alters the at-will employment relationship or limits CEC's authority to make personnel decisions. For employees, this policy applies to workplace concerns but does not apply to routine performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, or termination decisions unless a violation of policy, law, or established process is alleged.

Definitions

- **Complainant:** An individual (student, parent, employee, or community member) raising a concern through the informal complaint process.
- **Grievant:** An individual (student, parent, employee, or community member) submitting a formal grievance under this policy.
- **Informal Complaint:** A concern raised at the school or department level with the intent to resolve the issue collaboratively and promptly.
- **Formal Grievance:** A written complaint submitted to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) after school-level resolution has been attempted or when informal resolution is not appropriate.
- **Business Days:** Days when CEC schools or administrative offices are open, excluding weekends, holidays, and school breaks.
- **Designee:** An individual appointed by an administrator to act on their behalf.

Scope and Limitations

This policy applies to student, parent, and community member concerns regarding school operations, decisions, or actions. This policy does not replace legally mandated procedures, including, but not limited to Title IX, Section 504, special education, or other compliance processes. Concerns falling under those processes will be redirected accordingly. CEC reserves the right to decline or discontinue review of complaints that are duplicative, previously addressed, outside the scope of this policy, untimely, or determined to be made in bad faith. CEC may bypass the informal complaint process when the nature of the concern warrants immediate administrative review, including, but not limited to, concerns involving safety, alleged misconduct, or legal compliance. CEC will make reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality throughout the review process to the extent possible while ensuring a thorough and fair review. Procedures and policies for CEC employee complaints and grievances are found in the CEC Employee Handbook.

Informal Complaint Process

Step 1: Contact Appropriate Staff Member or Department

The informal process is the first step in resolving concerns. Whenever possible, the complainant should attempt to resolve the issue directly with the individual(s) involved (e.g., teacher, staff member, or administrator). Most concerns can be resolved through direct communication, either in person or via email. CEC will make reasonable efforts to respond to informal concerns within 10 business days.

Step 2: School-Level Review (Head of School or Department Director)

If the concern remains unresolved, or if direct communication is not appropriate, the complainant should contact the Head of School or the appropriate Department Director.

The Head of School, or their designee, will review the concern, which may include gathering relevant information from the complainant and other parties involved, and will work to resolve the issue at the school or department level. CEC may bypass the informal process when appropriate.

CEC will make reasonable efforts to resolve concerns at this level within 10 business days, when feasible. If the concern involves a Head of School, the matter will be reviewed by the CEO, or their designee.

Formal Grievance Process

Step 3: Submit a Formal Grievance to the CEO

If the issue remains unresolved after Step 2, or if informal resolution is not appropriate, the complainant (now “grievant”) may submit a formal grievance using the [CEC Grievance Form](#). All written submissions must be factual and concise and may include supporting documentation. The grievance should include:

- The date(s) of the incident(s)
- The individuals involved
- A description of the concern
- Any relevant policy, procedure, or expectation (if known)
- A summary of steps taken to resolve the issue at the school level (if applicable)
- The requested resolution

The CEO, or their designee, will conduct a review of the grievance, which may include gathering additional information, and will issue a written decision within 15 business days, unless additional time is necessary. The grievant will be notified if additional time is required. Resolutions may include clarification of policy, corrective action, or other appropriate remedies at the discretion of CEC.

Step 4: Appeal to the CEC Governing Board of Directors

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the CEO’s decision, they may submit a written appeal to the CEC Governing Board within 15 business days of receiving the decision.

The appeal must include:

- A summary of the concern
- The individuals involved
- The steps taken to resolve the issue
- The reason for the appeal, aligned to the criteria below
- The requested outcome

The Board President, or designee, will determine whether the appeal meets the criteria for Board review. The Governing Board will consider an appeal only when one or more of the following

conditions are met:

1. New information is presented that was not available during earlier steps;
2. There is evidence that the grievance process was not followed or that the grievant was denied a fair opportunity to present the concern;
3. The matter involves a decision or action that exceeds the CEO's delegated authority;
4. A conflict of interest involving the CEO, or designee, materially impacted the outcome.

The Governing Board's review is limited to the criteria above and does not include re-investigation of the underlying concern. If accepted, the appeal will be reviewed at a regularly scheduled Board meeting, and a written decision will be issued. If the appeal is declined, the grievant will be notified.

While any member of the public is always welcome to speak in an open Board meeting during the allotted time, no grievance issue will be addressed by the Board without the grievant having first followed these procedures. Issues concerning employee or student privacy, legal advice, and any other matter permitted under law may be addressed in Executive Session.

Appeal to the Colorado Charter School Institute

If the grievant believes the matter involves a violation of law or CSI policy, they may contact the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) in accordance with CSI's complaint procedures. This can be done by submitting a written grievance via email to the Colorado Charter School Institute ("the Institute") Executive Director. After review, the Institute's Executive Director will publish his/her conclusions in writing within 15 calendar days from receipt of the written concern. The decision of CEC's Governing Board will not be overturned unless there are compelling grounds that the school violated an applicable law, regulation, policy, or contract provision. The Institute can be contacted at (303) 866-3299 or csi_info@csi.state.co.us.