

Procedures for the Advisory Grievance Committee

Members:

Christina Eugene (Kindergarten Teacher)

Casey Scott (Student Success Team Social Worker)

Jose Ortiz (Parent)

Vicky Jackson (Parent)

I. Membership

The bylaws of Foundation Academy states the following: In accordance with New Jersey law (N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-15), the Board of Trustees shall establish an Advisory Grievance Committee comprised of both parents and teachers to make non-binding recommendations to the Board of Trustees concerning the disposition of complaints.

The Advisory Grievance Committee shall have four members who will serve one year terms, with one member designated as chairperson by the other committee members. Committee members shall be appointed each year at the first Board of Trustees meeting following the annual meeting or as soon thereafter as practicable. Advisory Grievance Committee members may serve no more than two consecutive terms on the committee.

II. Committee Charge

The committee is authorized to hear representations by the persons directly involved in grievances and to advise adjustment by the administration, when appropriate. Advice for adjustment in favor of an aggrieved parent/guardian may be given to the Board of Trustees only after the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Talent Officer most directly empowered to adjust it, has been given similar advice and has not acted upon it within a reasonable time.

III. Meetings

The Chair calls the meetings of the Committee. A meeting should be held after new members join the Committee to inform them of the procedures of the Committee. Subsequent meetings shall be called as individual cases or other business requires.

IV. Duties of the Chair of the Committee

It is the Chair's responsibility to conduct preliminary informal discussions with persons contacting the Committee with respect to potential formal grievances. Often the issues involved can either be resolved informally or are issues beyond the scope of the Committee's jurisdiction. Thus, not all matters that come to the Chair's attention result in the filing of formal grievances.

The preliminary discussions should include: (1) the definition of the concerns; (2) a determination that the concerns are within the Committee's jurisdiction (that is, the potential grievant must be a parent and there must have been an attempt by the grievant to resolve the

concerns with the appropriate administrative official); (3) a discussion of the appropriateness of a formal grievance as a means for resolution of the concerns; and (4) an attempt to reach a resolve, where appropriate.

The Chair decides during these discussions whether the Committee should be appointed to cover the matter in greater depth. If the Advisory Grievance committee is to be appointed, the grievant must construct a written statement of the grievance with the Chair. This written statement must indicate the specific grievances with supporting facts and circumstances, against whom they are directed, the dates, and the proposed remedies. When the written statement is received by the Chair, they notify the grievant in writing whether the matter has been accepted for hearing and, if not, why not. If the matter is accepted, they notify the Chief Executive Officer, with a copy of the written grievance attached, starts a file for the individual grievance, and notifies the members of the Advisory Grievance Committee. The Committee Chair determines the scope of the committee's responsibility. They notify the grievant that the committee has been appointed and schedules time to begin the hearings. They also notify the other parties directly involved that the committee has been appointed and gives them a copy of the written statement of the grievance.

V. Confidentiality of Proceedings

Meetings of the full Committee when it is reviewing a grievance are closed to the public; only persons asked to attend by the Chair of the Committee may do so. Information, obtained by the Committee, is confidential. However, parties directly involved in the grievance have access to all documents related to the grievance.

VI. Procedures for the hearings

Impartiality is essential on the part of the members of the committee. While parties may be present at meetings, the grievance procedure is primarily intended to facilitate resolution of the grievance. Thus the committee usually hears one witness at a time with no other witness present except a party to the grievance who chooses to be present. A party to the grievance will be offered an opportunity to be heard by the committee. A party may be accompanied by a person of his or her choice, if reasonable notice is given to the committee Chair. Other persons with relevant information may be called to appear before the committee Chair, and any person directly involved in the grievance and any member of the committee may suggest other persons who should appear. The committee Chair is responsible for deciding who will be asked to appear and for scheduling hearings, which may involve multiple sessions. The committee Chair determines the conduct of all discussions unless these procedures specify how they must be conducted.

At any point in the grievance procedure, the grievant has the option of withdrawing their grievance at any time or stating that it has been satisfactorily resolved. Such action terminates the responsibilities of the committee. No formal report, except a statement that the matter was resolved or withdrawn, should be submitted by the committee Chair to the CEO.

At the Conclusion of the hearing phase on a grievance that has not been resolved or withdrawn, the committee writes a report, including its recommendations for resolution of the matter, and forwards it to the CEO. The report is based on information from the hearings and on other information made available to all parties directly involved in the grievance. A meeting of the Committee is then held to act upon the report and recommendations. Copies of the committee's report and recommendations, if they are accepted by the full Committee, or, if not, the Committee's report and recommendations, should be sent to the grievant, the parties "directly involved" in the grievance, and if the report recommends any action, to the administrative superior most directly empowered to adjust the grievance and who is not "directly involved." Although the report is advisory, the administrative superior will be asked to report to the Committee whether they have taken any action in response to the report and, if so, what action was taken. If the administrative superior declines to take appropriate action on the Committee report within a reasonable time, the Committee will report the matter to the Board of Trustees.

VII. Grievances covered by the committee

Grievances within the committee's jurisdiction include matters directly related to student equity, such as suspensions, access to services and programming, school experience, etc.

Only current parents/guardians may file a grievance with the Committee.

[Advisory Grievance Form](#)