



Mountain Song Community School Grievance Policy & Procedures

Mountain Song Community School encourages open and solution-oriented communication for settling differences and conflicts among students, parents, teachers, staff members, administrators, and Board members. We recognize that issues not dealt with directly can become destructive to the school community and interfere with the learning process of our students. As adults, we are responsible to model civil discourse and respectful communication for our students and fellow community members. As such, the school encourages members of the Mountain Song Community to express concerns directly with the individual involved so that the school's focus remains on student learning.

These procedures outlined below are how faculty, staff, parents, and students are expected to express grievances about other members of the school community. They are designed to resolve conflicts and settle differences promptly, equitably, and at the lowest possible faculty or administrative level. The administration and Board expect that conflict will be addressed and proactively dealt with following the fewest steps of the procedures below. However, if the conflict is not resolved at the lowest faculty or administrative level, these guidelines provide a process for resolution.

Grievances are made by individuals. The individual making the grievance is called the grievant, and if the grievance concerns an individual (not a decision or situation) that individual is called the respondent.

Grievance Procedures: Mountain Song Community School is committed to ensuring that the following procedures are followed:

1. Address Issue with Those Directly Involved.

The grievant must first bring the concern to the attention of the individual(s) directly involved (respondent). A meeting should be scheduled where the concerns can be expressed in private and in an environment conducive to resolution. Should a grievant fail to begin the process at the lowest possible level, and instead go directly to a supervisor or the Board with a concern, the person at the higher level in the policy shall redirect the grievant to the appropriate level in the process.

NOTE: A grievant is not required to address the issue with the person directly involved if the grievant is alleging harassment or discrimination. In cases relating to allegations of harassment or discrimination, please see the Our Work Environment section of the Mountain Song Community School Staff Handbook. In allegations of sex-based discrimination in Mountain Song's educational programming, please contact the school's Title IX Coordinator, Kim Butler, kbutler@mountainsongschool.org.

Criminal Matters: Behaviors, situations, or circumstances that involve legal or criminal matters are not addressed by this policy and should be referred to civil authorities.

2. Address Issue with Executive Director.

If a satisfactory resolution is not realized after a direct conversation between the conflicted parties, the situation must be brought to the attention of the Supervising School Director or the Executive Director in writing (email, google form, hard copy letter) within ten (10) business days of the above meeting.

The Executive Director will schedule a phone call or an in-person meeting within 48 hours or 2 business days of receiving the complaint whenever possible in order to address the situation, facilitate communication, and develop goals for conflict resolution. Both or all of the conflicted parties must be provided the opportunity to comment on their perceptions of the incident or issue. The Executive Director will monitor this process until resolution is realized or until an impasse is reached.

If the concern is regarding the Executive Director, the Board President, or Board member designee will facilitate the complaint at this level. If the concern is between the Executive Director and a Board member(s), the grievant submits the complaint directly to either the Board President or to the Vice President if the grievance is with the Board President, following the process set forth below.

3. Submit a Written Grievance to the Board of Directors. If the grievant is not satisfied with the response received after completing Steps One and Two, the grievant may file a formal written grievance with the Mountain Song's Board of Directors. The written grievance must:

- a. Describe in detail the incident, decision or practice that gave rise to the complaint;
- b. If possible, cite the contract, policy, or procedure that has been violated and/or rationale for concern;
- c. Describe what conflict resolution strategies were attempted via steps one and two; and
- d. Explain what corrective action or resolution is being requested.

The written grievance may be submitted through the electronic Grievance Form, or a hard copy version of the Grievance Form, both [linked here](#) and found on the Governance webpage. Both forms prompt the writer to provide information on the required details. A written grievance may also be submitted by email containing the necessary information directly to board@mountainsongschool.com.

Within ten (10) business days of receipt of the grievance, the President of the Board or designee Board Member will review the written grievance and review the above process with the grievant to ensure that the proper initial steps were taken.

If the first three steps were properly followed, then the Board President or Board member designee will review the written grievance and provide an initial written communication to voting Board members either determining a) that the grievance warrants full review by the Board, b) redirecting the grievant to an alternative course of action, or c) declining to review or act on the written grievance. Voting Board members will have one week (seven calendar days) to respond to the Board President or Board member designee in agreement or disagreement with the initial determination. If there is not a quorum of voting members who agree with the initial determination, the initial determination shall be added to the next Board meeting agenda. The Board shall follow all laws and regulations determining what topics can be discussed in an Open Meeting and which must be discussed in Executive Session.

If the Board determines that the grievance does not merit full Board review, the President or Board member designee will explain this determination in a brief written statement to the grievant within 30 days.

If the Board determines that the grievance warrants full review by the Board, then it shall be added to the next Board meeting agenda. The Board shall follow all laws and regulations determining what topics can be discussed in an Open Meeting and which must be discussed in Executive Session. The written grievance shall be submitted to all Board members as far in advance of the Board meeting as practicable to permit the Board to consider the matter carefully. Consideration may include an investigation to determine additional information related to the grievance.

If the grievance goes to the full Board for a hearing, the grievant will receive a written response within 30 days of the hearing.

The Board will notify its authorizer of the grievance if it involves a student with an IEP or 504 Plan or a student safety issue.

While the Board will hear complaints during the public comment period of a Board meeting, formal grievances shall not be brought to the Board as a matter of public comment, as this does not give the Board sufficient time to consider the issue and address it through the grievance process. The Board will not hear grievances that do not follow the grievance process. Issues of employee or student privacy may be addressed in Executive Session, as is legally proper.

Concern Between Executive Director and Board Member(s). If the concern is between the Executive Director and a Board member(s), the voting members of the Board, excluding the grievant and respondent, review the grievance and take one or more of the following actions:

- Request input from the grievant, respondent, or both
- Investigate the situation and circumstances by interviewing other involved parties

During this period, the grievant and respondent should refrain from interactions that may aggravate the situation further.

4. Submit a Written Grievance to the Colorado Charter School Institute (“the Institute) Executive Director.

If the grievant is not satisfied with the School Board’s determination not to review the written grievance or the written resolution reached by the School Board after reviewing the grievance, the grievant may submit its concerns in written format to the Institute within five business days from receiving the written decision of the School Board. After review, the Institute’s Executive Director will publish his or her conclusions in writing within 15 calendar days from receipt of the written concern. The decision of the School’s 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.

Retaliation Prohibited

Mountain Song Community School prohibits retaliation against a grievant for filing a grievance under this policy or for assisting in a grievance investigation. Retaliation occurs when an employer (through a manager, supervisor, administrator or directly) fires an employee or takes any other type of adverse action against an employee for engaging in protected activity.

An adverse action is an action which would dissuade a reasonable employee from raising a concern about a possible violation or engaging in other related protected activity. Retaliation can have a negative impact on overall employee morale (US Department of Labor). If you perceive retaliation for making a grievance or for your participation in the investigation, please follow the grievance procedure outlined above. The situation will be investigated.