

## **Oceanside Collegiate Academy Student Grievance Policy**

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and efficient process for reviewing and resolving student-related grievances, which may be filed and pursued by a student's parent or legal guardian. Oceanside Collegiate Academy ("OCA") and the student, parent(s), and legal guardian(s) will keep all grievance proceedings confidential to the extent permitted by law and practicable under the circumstances.

The OCA student grievance process may be used by OCA students or their parents or legal guardians as follows:

1. To address an alleged violation of applicable law or regulations that directly affects the student.
2. To address an alleged violation of OCA Board Policy that directly affects the student.
3. To address an alleged violation of the OCA charter that directly affects the student.
4. To address alleged discrimination or harassment against the student.

A student, parent, or legal guardian who files a grievance pursuant to this policy has the right to be represented by legal counsel at the student's, parent's, or legal guardian's own expense.

If any of the timelines set forth herein are not met, the grievance may be deemed waived by the OCA official(s) charged with investigating and deciding the grievance.

The OCA official(s) charged with investigating and deciding grievances are entitled to extend the timelines herein for investigating and issuing decisions if necessary to conduct a thorough and complete investigation into a timely filed grievance or appeal.

### **Step One: Informal Discussion**

Subject to the following paragraph, the aggrieved student, parent, or legal guardian must first initiate an informal discussion with the other person(s) involved in the incident giving rise to the grievance within ten (10) school days of the incident or when the aggrieved student learned of the incident for the purpose of attempting to resolve the grievance.

If the grievance is against another student, or if the grievance includes allegations of discrimination or harassment, the student, parent, or legal guardian filing the grievance is not required to initiate an informal discussion with the other student or the person(s) allegedly discriminating against or harassing the student, and the student, parent, or legal guardian may proceed immediately to Step Two.

### **Step Two: Submit a Written Grievance to the Principal**

If the informal discussion does not resolve the student's concerns, the student may within ten (10) school days after the informal discussion (or if the student was not required by this Policy to initiate an informal discussion, within ten school days after learning of the incident giving rise to the

grievance) submit a written Grievance Form to the OCA Principal, except that if the grievance includes allegations of discrimination or harassment against the OCA Principal, the student, parent, or legal guardian may submit the written Grievance Form directly to the OCA Board of Directors.

The student must include in the Grievance Form a description of the grievance, the actions already taken by the student to attempt to resolve the grievance, if any, and the specific relief requested. A Grievance Form that does not contain such information will be deemed incomplete and returned to the student to complete within the required timeline. Submission of an incomplete Grievance Form does not extend the required timeline for submission. Only the issues set forth in the written Grievance Form shall be considered thereafter.

Upon receipt of a Grievance Form, within fifteen (15) school days the Principal shall schedule a conference with the student, parent, and/or legal guardian and any other individual(s) deemed necessary by the Principal to investigate the allegations. The Principal shall investigate the grievance and issue a written decision to the student, parent, and/or legal guardian who filed the grievance as promptly as possible under the circumstances.

### **Step Three: Final Appeal to the OCA Board of Directors**

If a student, parent, and/or legal guardian is not satisfied with the Principal's written decision, the student, parent, and/or legal guardian may submit a written appeal to the OCA Board of Directors within ten (10) school days of receiving the Principal's written decision, which can be accomplished by submitting the written appeal to the OCA Board Chair. The written appeal must include a copy of the original written Grievance Form, a copy of the Principal's written decision, and a written description of why the student, parent, and/or legal guardian is not satisfied with the Principal's written decision. An appeal that does not contain such information will be deemed incomplete and returned to the student to complete within the required timeline. Submission of an incomplete appeal does not extend the required timeline for submission of a complete appeal.

Within thirty (30) days of receipt of a written appeal (or the original Grievance Form if the grievance involves allegations of discrimination or harassment against the Principal and is filed directly with the Board), the OCA Board of Directors will schedule a hearing date and provide the student, parent, and/or legal guardian with notice of the hearing date, time, location and procedures. All hearings conducted pursuant to this Grievance Policy are considered non-adversarial. After the hearing, the OCA Board of Directors will issue a written decision within ten (10) business days, which will be final and binding.

Legal Reference(s):

S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended:

Section 59-40-60(F)(13) – Charter School Grievance Procedure