



**DR. LEWIS DOLPHIN STALLWORTH, SR. CHARTER SCHOOL  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**UNIFORM COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**Scope**

Dr. Lewis Dolphin Stallworth, Sr. Charter School (the "Charter School") policy is to comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. The Charter School is the local agency primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing educational programs. Pursuant to this policy, persons responsible for conducting investigations shall be knowledgeable about the laws and programs which they are assigned to investigate. This complaint procedure is adopted to provide a uniform system of complaint processing for the following types of complaints:

- (1) Complaints of discrimination against any protected group, including actual or perceived discrimination, on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics in any Charter School program or activity; and
- (2) Complaints of violations of state or federal law and regulations governing the following programs including but not limited to: special education, Title II, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, consolidated categorical aid, No Child Left Behind, migrant education, career technical and technical education training programs, child care and development programs, child nutrition program.
- (3) A complaint may also be filed alleging that a pupil enrolled in a public school was required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity as those terms are defined below.
  - a. "Educational activity" means an activity offered by a school, school district, charter school or county office of education that constitutes an integral fundamental part of elementary and secondary education, including, but not limited to, curricular and extracurricular activities.

- b. "Pupil fee" means a fee, deposit or other charge imposed on pupils, or a pupil's parents or guardians, in violation of Section 49011 and Section 5 of Article IX of the California Constitution, which require educational activities to be provided free of charge to all pupils without regard to their families' ability or willingness to pay fees or request special waivers, as provided for in *Hertzell v. Connell* (1984) 35 Cal.3d 899. A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
  - i. A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory, or is for credit.
  - ii. A security deposit, or other payment, that a pupil is required to make to obtain a lock, locker, book, class apparatus, musical instrument, uniform or other materials or equipment.
  - iii. A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment or uniforms associated with an educational activity.
- c. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to prohibit solicitation of voluntary donations of funds or property, voluntary participation in fundraising activities, or school districts, school, and other entities from providing pupils prizes or other recognition for voluntarily participating in fundraising activities.

The Charter School acknowledges and respects every individual's rights to privacy. Discrimination complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects [to the greatest extent reasonably possible] the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process. The Charter School cannot guarantee anonymity of the complainant. This includes keeping the identity of the complainant confidential. However, the Charter School will attempt to do so as appropriate. The Charter School may find it necessary to disclose information regarding the complaint/complainant to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation or proceedings, as determined by the Executive Director or designee on a case-by-case basis.

The Charter School prohibits any form of retaliation against any complainant in the complaint process, including but not limited to a complainant's filing of a complaint or the reporting of instances of discrimination. Such participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades or work assignments of the complainant.

#### Compliance Officers

The Governing Board designates the following compliance officer(s) to receive and investigate complaints and to ensure the Charter School's compliance with law:

[NAME]  
[ADDRESS]  
[TELEPHONE]

The Executive Director or designee shall ensure that employees designated to investigate complaints are knowledgeable about the laws and programs for which they are responsible. Designated employees may have access to legal counsel as determined by the Executive Director or designee.

### Notifications

The Executive Director or designee shall annually provide written notification of the Charter School's uniform complaint procedures to students, employees, parents/guardians, the Governing Board, appropriate private officials or representatives, and other interested parties.

The Executive Director or designee shall make available copies of the Charter School's uniform complaint procedures free of charge.

The notice shall:

1. Identify the person(s), position(s), or unit(s) responsible for receiving complaints.
2. Advise the complainant of any civil law remedies that may be available to him/her under state or federal discrimination laws, if applicable.
3. Advise the complainant of the appeal process pursuant to Education Code Section 262.3, including the complainant's right to take the complaint directly to the California Department of Education ("CDE") or to pursue remedies before civil courts or other public agencies.
4. Include statements that:
  - a. The Charter School is primarily responsible for compliance with state and federal laws and regulations;
  - b. The complaint review shall be completed within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of receipt of the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of the timeline;
  - c. An unlawful discrimination complaint must be filed not later than six (6) months from the date the alleged discrimination occurs, or six (6) months from the date the complainant first obtains knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination;
  - d. The complainant has a right to appeal the Charter School's decision to the CDE by filing a written appeal within fifteen (15) days of receiving the Charter School's decision; and
  - e. The appeal to the CDE must include a copy of the complaint filed with the Charter School and a copy of the Charter School's decision.

Procedures

The following procedures shall be used to address all complaints which allege that the Charter School has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs. Compliance officers shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions.

All parties involved in allegations shall be notified when a complaint is filed, when a complaint meeting or hearing is scheduled, and when a decision or ruling is made.

- Step 1: Filing of Complaint

Any individual, public agency, or organization may file a written complaint of alleged noncompliance by the Charter School.

A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination shall be initiated no later than six (6) months from the date when the alleged discrimination occurred, or six (6) months from the date when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination. A complaint may be filed by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered unlawful discrimination or by a person who believes that an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to unlawful discrimination.

The complaint shall be presented to the compliance officer who shall maintain a log of complaints received, providing each with a code number and date stamp.

If a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, Charter School staff shall assist him/her in the filing of the complaint.

- Step 2: Mediation

Within three (3) days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer may informally discuss with the complainant the possibility of using mediation. If the complainant agrees to mediation, the compliance officer shall make arrangements for this process.

Before initiating the mediation of a discrimination complaint, the compliance officer shall ensure that all parties agree to make the mediator a party to related confidential information.

If the mediation process does not resolve the problem within the parameters of law, the compliance officer shall proceed with his/her investigation of the complaint.

The use of mediation shall not extend the Charter School's timelines for investigating and resolving the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to such an extension of time.

- Step 3: Investigation of Complaint

The compliance officer is encouraged to hold an investigative meeting within five (5) days of receiving the complaint or an unsuccessful attempt to mediate the complaint. This meeting

shall provide an opportunity for the complainant and/or his/her representative to repeat the complaint orally.

The complainant and/or his/her representative shall have an opportunity to present the complaint and evidence or information leading to evidence to support the allegations in the complaint.

A complainant's refusal to provide the Charter School's investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, or his/her failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or his/her engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegation.

The Charter School's refusal to provide the investigator with access to records and/or other information related to the allegation in the complaint, or its failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or its engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in a finding, based on evidence collected, that a violation has occurred and may result in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant.

- Step 4: Response

OPTION 1:

Unless extended by written agreement with the complainant, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the Charter School's investigation and decision, as described in Step #5 below, within sixty (60) days of the Charter School's receipt of the complaint.

OPTION 2:

Within thirty (30) days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the Charter School's investigation and decision, as described in Step #5 below. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the compliance officer's decision, he/she may, within five days, file his/her complaint in writing with the Board.

The Board may consider the matter at its next regular Board meeting or at a special Board meeting convened in order to meet the sixty (60) day time limit within which the complaint must be answered. The Board may decide not to hear the complaint, in which case the compliance officer's decision shall be final.

If the Board hears the complaint, the compliance officer shall send the Board's decision to the complainant within sixty (60) days of the Charter School's initial receipt of the complaint or within the time period that has been specified in a written agreement with the complainant.

- Step 5: Final Written Decision

## Board Policy: Community Relations #105

The Charter School's decision shall be in writing and sent to the complainant. The Charter School's decision shall be written in English and in the language of the complainant whenever feasible or as required by law.

The decision shall include:

1. The findings of fact based on evidence gathered.
2. The conclusion(s) of law.
3. Disposition of the complaint.
4. Rationale for such disposition.
5. Corrective actions, if any are warranted.
6. Notice of the complainant's right to appeal the Charter School's decision within fifteen (15) days to the CDE and procedures to be followed for initiating such an appeal.
7. For discrimination complaints arising under state law, notice that the complainant must wait until sixty (60) days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies.
8. For discrimination complaints arising under federal law such complaint may be made at any time to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

If an employee is disciplined as a result of the complaint, the decision shall simply state that effective action was taken and that the employee was informed of the Charter School's expectations. The report shall not give any further information as to the nature of the disciplinary action.

### Appeals to the California Department of Education

If dissatisfied with the Charter School's decision, the complainant may appeal in writing to the CDE within fifteen (15) days of receiving the Charter School's decision. When appealing to the CDE, the complainant must specify the basis for the appeal of the decision and whether the facts are incorrect and/or the law has been misapplied. The appeal shall be accompanied by a copy of the locally filed complaint and a copy of the Charter School's decision.

Upon notification by the CDE that the complainant has appealed the Charter School's decision, the Executive Director or designee shall forward the following documents to the CDE:

1. A copy of the original complaint.
2. A copy of the decision.

3. A summary of the nature and extent of the investigation conducted by the Charter School, if not covered by the decision.
4. A copy of the investigation file, including but not limited to all notes, interviews, and documents submitted by all parties and gathered by the investigator.
5. A report of any action taken to resolve the complaint.
6. A copy of the Charter School's complaint procedures.
7. Other relevant information requested by the CDE.

The CDE may directly intervene in the complaint without waiting for action by the Charter School when one of the conditions listed in Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 4650 exists, including cases in which the Charter School has not taken action within sixty (60) days of the date the complaint was filed with the Charter School.

#### Civil Law Remedies

A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies outside of the Charter School's complaint procedures. Complainants may seek assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies that may be imposed by a court include, but are not limited to, injunctions and restraining orders. For discrimination complaints arising under state law, however, a complainant must wait until sixty (60) days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies. The moratorium does not apply to injunctive relief and is applicable only if the Charter School has appropriately, and in a timely manner, apprised the complainant of his/her right to file a complaint in accordance with 5 CCR 4622.

## POLICY AGAINST UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT

Dr. Lewis Dolphin Stallworth, Sr. Charter School (the "Charter School") is committed to providing a work and educational atmosphere that is free of unlawful harassment. The Charter School's policy prohibits sexual harassment and harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. The Charter School will not condone or tolerate harassment of any type by any employee, independent contractor or other person with which the Charter School does business. This policy applies to all employee actions and relationships, regardless of position or gender. The Charter School will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaint of harassment and take appropriate corrective action, if warranted.

### Prohibited Unlawful Harassment

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments or slurs;
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work because of sex, race or any other protected basis;
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment
- Deferential or preferential treatment based on any of the protected classes above.

### Prohibited Unlawful Sexual Harassment

In accordance with existing policy, discrimination on the basis of gender in education institutions is prohibited. All persons, regardless of gender, are afforded equal rights and opportunities and freedom from unlawful discrimination in education programs or activities conducted by the Charter School.

The Charter School is committed to provide a workplace free of sexual harassment and considers such harassment to be a major offense, which may result in disciplinary action, up to, and including dismissal, of the offending employee.

Sexual harassment consists of sexual advances, request for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission of the conduct is either made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2) an employment decision is based upon an individual's acceptance or rejection of that conduct; (3) that conduct interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

It is also unlawful to retaliate in any way against an employee who has articulated a good faith concern about sexual harassment against him/her or against another individual.

All supervisors of staff will receive sexual harassment training within six (6) months of their assumption of a supervisory position and will receive further training once every two (2) years thereafter. All staff will receive sexual harassment training and/or instruction concerning sexual harassment in the workplace as required by law.



Each employee has the responsibility to maintain a workplace free from any form of sexual harassment. Consequently, should any individual, in particular those with supervisory responsibilities, become aware of any conduct that may constitute sexual harassment or other prohibited behavior, immediate action should be taken to address such conduct. Employees and students are expected to act in a positive and professional manner and to contribute to a productive school environment that is free from harassing or disruptive activity. Any employee who believes they have been harassed or has witnessed harassment is encouraged to immediately report such harassment to their supervisor or the Executive Director. See Attachment B for the "Harassment Complaint Form."

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical assaults of a sexual nature, such as:
  - Rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults and
  - Intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against another's body, or poking another's body.
  
- Unwanted sexual advances, propositions or other sexual comments, such as:
  - Sexually oriented gestures, notices, remarks, jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience.
  - Preferential treatment or promises of preferential treatment to an employee for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any employee to engage in sexual activity for compensation or reward or deferential treatment for rejecting sexual conduct.
  - Subjecting or threats of subjecting an employee to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct or intentionally making performance of the employee's job more difficult because of the employee's sex.
  
- Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere at the workplace by employees, such as:
  - Displaying pictures, cartoons, posters, calendars, graffiti, objections, promotional materials, reading materials, or other materials that are sexually suggestive, sexually demeaning or pornographic or bringing to work or possessing any such material to read, display or view at work.
  - Reading publicly or otherwise publicizing in the work environment materials that are in any way sexually revealing, sexually suggestive, sexually demeaning or pornographic; and
  - Displaying signs or other materials purporting to segregate an employee by sex in an area of the workplace (other than restrooms or similar rooms).

The illustrations of harassment and sexual harassment above are not to be construed as an all-inclusive list of prohibited acts under this policy.

Complainants and witnesses under these policies will be protected from further harassment and will not be retaliated against in any aspect of their employment due to their participation in or filing of a complaint or reporting sexual harassment.

Board Policy: Community Relations #105

The Charter School will investigate complaints promptly and provide a written report of the investigation and decision as soon as practicable. The investigation will be handled in as confidential a manner as possible consistent with a full, fair, and proper investigation.

Employees may also direct their complaints to the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (“DFEH”), which has authority to conduct investigation of the facts. The deadline for filing complaints with the DFEH is one year from the date of the alleged unlawful conduct. If the DFEH believes a complaint is valid and settlement efforts fail, the DFEH may seek an administrative hearing before the California Fair Employment and Housing Commission (“FEHC”) or file a lawsuit in court. Both the FEHC and the courts have authority to award monetary and non-monetary relief in meritorious cases. Employees can contact the nearest DFEH office or the FEHC by checking the State Government listings in the local telephone directory.

While in most situations a personal relationship is a private matter, these relationships are not appropriate in a professional setting, particularly where one of the parties has management or supervisory responsibilities.

**COMPLAINTS AGAINST PERSONNEL**

**INTERNAL COMMUNICATION MODEL**

**DISPUTES ARISING FROM WITHIN THE SCHOOL/COMMUNICATION/MODEL  
CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

The ultimate purpose of a communication model is to encourage the growth and development of the Dr. Lewis Dolphin Stallworth, Sr. Charter School (“Charter School”) as a healthy community. Conflict is a part of any development or growth process and may arise in any community. An effective complaint and conflict resolution process is therefore an essential component of the communication model.

The Conflict Resolution Procedure is a model for all members of the Charter School community and is designed to address issues among the following: between parents and teachers; parents and administration; and teachers and teachers. The overall purpose of this procedure is to perpetuate a climate of collegiality, mutual trust and respect by resolving differences in a timely, objective and equitable manner.

Please note that specific complaints of unlawful harassment are addressed under the Charter School’s “Policy Against Unlawful Harassment.” The Charter School Uniform Complaint Policy/Procedure (“UCP”) shall be used to address all complaints which allege that the Charter School has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs.

**A. FOUR MAJOR AREAS OF COMMUNICATION:**

**Conflicts may include a wide area of issues, and regard family and staff concerns.** Conflicts may fall into one of four major areas or may be a combination of these areas as listed below. It is emphasized that the first step in the resolution of any conflicts in our community is direct communication with the involved parties. Where reasonably possible, the concerned parties are strongly encouraged to address their questions or concerns with the appropriate Charter School personnel listed under each communication area as follows:

**1. Policies and Legal Issues**

Current policies are available in the Charter School office. Reviewing policies and procedures lends information that may at times solve a conflict. The Board of Trustees at the Charter School has final approval for all school policies and procedures. Issues of policy and procedures should be addressed to the Executive Director.

**2. Procedures/Daily Operations**

The Executive Director (acting or otherwise) shall establish procedures designed to carry out the policies adopted by the CSB. Procedures pertain to anything regarding the daily operations of the Charter School. Procedures can be clarified by an office staff member or the Executive Director. The Executive Director serves as the primary administrator of the

school. Any daily operations/procedural issues should be addressed directly by the Executive Director.

**3. Pedagogy**

Pedagogical issues, which pertain to anything that occurs in the classroom, i.e. teaching, curriculum, classroom management, or teacher-student relationships should be addressed directly to the class teacher.

**4. Interpersonal Communication and Relationships**

Concerns between people or communication breakdown should be directly communicated with the person(s) involved.

**B. CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE:**

**1. Internal Complaints (Complaints by Employees Against Employees)**

This section of the policy is for use when a Charter School employee raises a complaint or concern about a co-worker.

If reasonably possible, internal complaints should be resolved at the lowest possible level, including attempts to discuss/resolve concerns with the immediate supervisor. However, in the event an informal resolution may not be achieved or is not appropriate, the following steps will be followed by the Executive Director or designee:

- a. The complainant will bring the matter to the attention of the Executive Director as soon as possible after attempts to resolve the complaint with the immediate supervisor (or purportedly offending employee) have failed or if not appropriate; and
- b. The complainant will reduce his or her complaint to writing, indicating all known and relevant facts. The Executive Director or designee will then investigate the facts and provide a solution or explanation;
- c. If the complaint is about the Executive Director, the complainant may file his or her complaint in a signed writing to the Chair of the Board of Directors of the School, who will then confer with the Board and may conduct a fact-finding or authorize a third party investigator on behalf of the Board. The Chair or investigator will report his or her findings to the Board for review and action, if necessary.

This policy cannot guarantee that every problem will be resolved to the employee's satisfaction. However, the School values each employee's ability to express concerns and the need for resolution without fear of adverse consequence to employment.

**2. Policy for Complaints Against Employees (Complaints by Third Parties Against Employees)**

This section of the policy is for use when a non-employee raises a complaint or concern about a Charter School employee.

If complaints cannot be resolved informally, complainants may file a written complaint with the Executive Director or Board President (if the complaint concerns the Executive Director) as soon as possible after the events that give rise to the employee's work-related concerns. The written complaint should set forth in detail the factual basis for the employee's complaint.

In processing the complaint, Executive Director (or designee) shall abide by the following process:

- a. The Executive Director or designee shall use his or her best efforts to talk with the parties identified in the complaint and to ascertain the facts relating to the complaint.
- b. In the event that the Executive Director (or designee) finds that a complaint against an employee is valid, the Executive Director (or designee) may take appropriate disciplinary action against the employee. As appropriate, the Executive Director (or designee) may also simply counsel/reprimand employees as to their conduct without initiating formal disciplinary measures.
- c. The Executive Director's (or designee's) decision relating to the complaint shall be final unless it is appealed to the Board of Directors of the Charter School. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be final.

**C. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. Confidentiality: All complainants will be notified that information obtained from the complainants and thereafter gathered will be maintained in a manner as confidential as possible, but in some circumstances absolute confidentiality cannot be assured.
2. Non-Retaliation: All complainants will be advised that they will be protected against retaliation as a result of the filing of any complaints or participation in any complaint process.
3. Resolution: The Board (if a complaint is about the Executive Director) or the Executive Director or designee will investigate complaints appropriately under the circumstances and pursuant to the applicable procedures, and if necessary, take appropriate remedial measures to ensure effective resolution of any complaint.

The District shall not intervene in any such internal disputes without the consent of the governing board of the Charter School and shall refer any complaints or reports regarding such

disputes to the Board of Directors or Executive Director of the Charter School for resolution pursuant to the Charter School's policies.



2. Have you discussed your complaint or brought your complaint to any Charter School personnel? If you have, to whom did you take the complaint, and what was the result?

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3. Please provide copies of any written documents that may be relevant or supportive of your complaint.

I have attached supporting documents.  Yes  No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail complaint and any relevant documents to: TBD

[NAME]  
[ADDRESS]  
[TELEPHONE]