

# **Pinnacle Chartered Public School**

## *Grievance & Complaint Resolution Policy*



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## I. Purpose and Principles

Pinnacle Chartered Public School is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community—students, families, employees, volunteers, and community partners—have access to a fair, transparent process for raising concerns and resolving disagreements. The school recognizes that timely, respectful communication prevents misunderstandings and strengthens trust.

This Grievance & Complaint Resolution Policy establishes the procedures by which individuals may express concerns, seek remedies, and appeal decisions. The policy complies with New Hampshire laws, federal civil rights requirements, and the governance structure outlined in Pinnacle’s charter.

This policy is publicly available on the school’s website.

## II. Definitions

A *complaint* is any concern or dissatisfaction expressed verbally or in writing that requires attention from school personnel.

A *grievance* is a formal written submission claiming that an action, decision, or omission has adversely affected a student, parent/guardian, employee, or community member.

Grievances may relate to:

- ✓ student treatment, discipline, safety, or supervision
- ✓ staff conduct or professionalism
- ✓ violation or misapplication of school policies
- ✓ administrative decisions
- ✓ discrimination, harassment, or retaliation
- ✓ violations of federal or state educational rights

## III. Non-Retaliation

No individual will face retaliation, intimidation, or adverse treatment for raising a complaint or grievance in good faith. Retaliation is itself a violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary action.

## **IV. Accessibility and Language Access**

Consistent with Pinnacle's commitment to equitable access and its At-Risk Support Plan:

- ✓ The grievance form will be available online and in paper form.
- ✓ Translation and interpreter services will be provided to families as needed.
- ✓ Accommodations will be provided for individuals with disabilities.

No concern will be dismissed due to literacy, language, or accessibility barriers.

## **V. Levels of Resolution**

Pinnacle encourages the resolution of concerns at the lowest appropriate level. However, complainants always retain the right to file a formal written grievance at any stage.

### **Level 1: Informal Resolution (Optional but Encouraged)**

Whenever appropriate, individuals should attempt to resolve concerns directly with the person most closely involved.

Examples:

- ✓ A parent begins by speaking with the teacher.
- ✓ A staff member speaks with a colleague or supervisor.
- ✓ A student speaks with their teacher or advisor.

Informal resolution should occur promptly, ideally within five school days of the concern arising. If the concern is resolved, no further action is required.

However, informal resolution is *not required* if the complainant believes it would be unsafe, inappropriate, or futile.

In such cases, they may proceed directly to Level 2 or Level 3.

## **Level 2: Formal Grievance**

A grievance becomes formal when submitted in writing—either through the online grievance form or by submitting the paper form which may be downloaded from the Pinnacle website.

Upon receipt, the Executive Director will:

1. Provide written acknowledgment within three school days,
2. Review relevant records, policies, and accounts,
3. Conduct interviews or request written statements as needed,
4. Meet with the complainant (if requested),
5. Issue a written decision within ten school days of the meeting or investigation.

Reasonable extensions may be granted with written notice.

### **Direct Filing Option**

If the grievance concerns:

- ✓ the Executive Director's conduct,
- ✓ A decision made by the Executive Director
- ✓ any matter in which the Executive Director is personally implicated

The complainant may bypass Level 2 entirely and file directly with the Board Chair using the online form or paper form.

This right applies to *all students, parents, and employees*.

The Executive Director will play no role in reviewing complaints filed against them.

## **Level 3: Appeal or Direct Filing with the Board of Trustees**

A complainant may bring a grievance directly to the Board Chair if the matter involves the Executive Director or if they believe the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved through earlier steps. In such cases, the grievance should clearly identify the concern, the individuals involved, any

supporting documentation, and the resolution being sought. The Board Chair will acknowledge receipt within five school days.

Upon receiving the grievance, the Board Chair will determine the most appropriate path for review. This may include placing the matter before the full Board, referring it to the Governance or Policy Committee, requesting additional information or documentation, or seeking input from legal counsel. If a hearing is warranted, it will be scheduled for the next regular Board meeting or a specially called meeting. In accordance with RSA 91-A, the hearing may take place in either public or nonpublic session, depending on the nature of the complaint and the confidentiality rights of those involved.

During the hearing, both the complainant and the administration will have the opportunity to present relevant statements, documentation, or other evidence. After reviewing all materials and testimony, the Board will deliberate and issue a written decision within twenty school days. This decision constitutes the final step in Pinnacle's internal grievance process. Nothing in this policy prevents a complainant from seeking external remedies at any time, including filing a complaint with the New Hampshire Department of Education, the U.S. Office for Civil Rights, the New Hampshire Human Rights Commission, or, when appropriate, local law enforcement.

## **VI. Special Categories of Complaints**

### **1. Civil Rights, Discrimination, or Harassment**

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, or religion will be handled under the federal civil rights frameworks that apply to public schools, including Title IX, Title VI, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504. These complaints are investigated by Pinnacle's designated compliance officers using the timelines, notice requirements, and due-process protections required by law.

## **2. Special Education and IEP-Related Concerns**

Concerns involving a student's special education services, IEP development, evaluation procedures, or the implementation of IDEA protections follow the processes established jointly between Pinnacle and the student's district of residence. These procedures are consistent with IDEA, Section 504, and the special education implementation model described in the school's approved charter.

## **3. Bullying and Cyberbullying**

Complaints involving bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation related to bullying are investigated according to RSA 193-F. This includes timely written findings, notification to parents or guardians, remedies designed to restore student safety, and explicit protections against retaliation.

## **4. Employee Workplace Complaints**

Employee complaints regarding workplace conditions, supervision, or employment practices are handled according to state and federal labor laws and Pinnacle's internal employment policies. When appropriate, these matters may also involve outside agencies or legal counsel.

## **VII. Recordkeeping and Reporting**

All grievance-related records are confidential and stored securely according to:

- ✓ FERPA
- ✓ state retention rules
- ✓ Board policy

The Executive Director (or Board Chair for complaints involving the Director) will maintain a record of grievances, resolutions, and timelines. An annual report will be shared with the Board of Trustees to audit all grievances submitted to the Executive Director and to support continuous improvement.

## **VIII. Publication and Distribution**

This policy will be:

- ✓ published on the school website,
- ✓ available in print upon request,
- ✓ accessible through translation and support services.