

Uniform Complaint Procedures

These general uniform complaint procedures (UCP) shall be used to investigate and resolve only the complaints specified in Board Policy 1312.3.

Compliance Officers

The Director of Personnel is the designated lead district-level compliance officer responsible for receiving and coordinating the District's response to complaints and for complying with state and federal rights laws.

The compliance officer who receives a complaint may assign another compliance officer to investigate and resolve the complaint. The compliance officer shall promptly notify the complainant if another compliance officer is assigned to the complaint.

In no instance shall a compliance officer be assigned to a complaint in which he/she has a bias or conflict of interest that would prohibit him/her from fairly investigating or resolving the complaint. Any complaint against or implicating a compliance officer may be filed with the Superintendent or designee.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that employees designated to investigate and resolve complaints receive training and are knowledgeable about the laws and programs at issue in the complaints to which they are assigned. Training provided to such designated employees shall include current state and federal laws and regulations governing the program, applicable processes for investigating and resolving complaints including those involving alleged unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), applicable standards for reaching decisions on complaints, and appropriate corrective measures. Designated employees may have access to legal counsel as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

(cf. 9124 Attorney)

Notifications

The Superintendent or designee shall meet the notification requirements including the annual dissemination of district uniform complaint procedures and information about available appeals, civil law remedies, and conditions under which a complaint may be taken directly to the California Department of Education.

Information regarding uniform complaint procedures shall be provided annually (including information regarding unlawful student fees and Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) requirements) to students, employees, parents/guardians, school and district advisory committees, appropriate private school officials, and other interested parties.

(Education Code 262.3, 49013, 52075, 5 CCR 4622)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all students and parents/guardians, including students and parents/guardians with limited English proficiency, have access to the relevant information provided in the district's policy, regulation, forms, and notices concerning the UCP.

If fifteen percent (15%) or more of students enrolled in a particular district school speak a single primary language other than English, the district's policy, regulation, forms, and notices concerning

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the UCP shall be translated into that language, in accordance with Education Code 234.1 and 48985. In all other instances, the district shall ensure meaningful access to all relevant UCP information for parents/guardians with limited English proficiency.

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 antidiscrimination laws, if applicable
3. Advise the complainant of the appeal process, including, if applicable, the complainant's right to take a complaint directly to the California Department of Education (CDE) or to pursue remedies before civil courts or other public agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in cases involving unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying).
4. Include statements that:
 - a. The district has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs.
 - b. The complaint review shall be completed within 60 calendar days from the date of receipt of the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of the timeline.
 - c. A complaint alleging retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) must be filed not later than six months from the date it occurred, or six months from the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged unlawful discrimination. The time for filing may be extended for up to 90 days by the Superintendent or designee for good cause upon written request by the complainant setting forth the reasons for the extension.
 - d. A student enrolled in a public school shall not be required to pay a fee for his/her participation in an educational activity that constitutes an integral fundamental part of the district's educational program, including curricular and extracurricular activities.
 - e. The Board is required to adopt and annually update the LCAP in a manner that includes meaningful engagement of parents/guardians, students, and other stakeholders in the development and/or review of the LCAP.
 - f. A foster youth shall receive information about educational rights related to his/her educational placement, enrollment in and checkout from school, as well as the responsibilities of the district liaison for foster youth to ensure and facilitate these requirements and to assist the student in ensuring proper transfer of his/her credits, records, and grades when he/she transfers between schools or between the district and another district.
 - g. A foster youth or homeless student who transfers into a district high school or between district high schools shall be notified of the district's responsibility to:
 - 1) Accept any coursework or part of the coursework that the student has satisfactorily completed in another public school, juvenile court school, or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency, and to issue full or partial credit for the coursework completed;

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- 2) Not require the student to retake any course or a portion of a course which he/she has satisfactorily completed in another public school, juvenile court school, or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency;
 - 3) If the student has completed his/her second year of high school before the transfer, provide the student information about district-adopted coursework and Board-imposed graduation requirements from which he/she may be exempted pursuant to Education Code 51225.1
- h. The complainant has a right to appeal the district's decision to the CDE by filing a written appeal within 15 calendar days of receiving the district's decision.
- i. The appeal to the CDE must include a copy of the complaint filed with the district and a copy of the district's decision.
- j. Copies of the district's UCP are available free of charge.

Procedures

The district shall investigate and resolve the uniform complaint within 60 calendar days of the District's receipt of the written complaint. Timelines may be extended provided there is written agreement from the complainant for such an extension of time. *(5 CCR 4631)*

The compliance officer shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions, including steps taken during the investigation and all information required for compliance with 5 CCR 4631 and 4633.

All parties involved in the allegations shall be notified when a complaint is filed and when a decision or ruling is made. However, the compliance officer shall keep all complaints or allegations of retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) confidential except when disclosure is necessary to carry out the investigation, take subsequent corrective action, conduct ongoing monitoring, or maintain the integrity of the process.
(5 CCR 4630, 4964)

Step 1: Filing of a Complaint

All complaints shall be filed in accordance with the following:

1. A written complaint alleging district violation of applicable state or federal law or regulations governing adult education programs, consolidated categorical aid programs, migrant education, career technical and technical education and training programs, child care and development programs, child nutrition programs, and special education programs may be filed by any individual, public agency, or organization.
(5 CCR 4630)
2. Any complaint alleging noncompliance with law regarding the prohibition against requiring students to pay student fees, deposits, and charges or any requirement related to the LCAP may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence, or information leading to evidence, to support an allegation of noncompliance. A complaint about a violation of the prohibition against the charging of unlawful student fees may be filed with the principal of the school. However, any such complaint shall be filed no later than one year from the date the alleged violation occurred. *(Education Code 49013, 52075; 5 CCR 4630)*

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3. A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) may be filed only by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered the unlawful discrimination or by a person who believes that an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to it. The complaint shall be initiated no later than six months from the date when the alleged unlawful discrimination occurred, or six months from the date when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged unlawful discrimination. The time for filing may be extended for up to 90 days by the Superintendent or designee for good cause upon written request by the complainant setting forth the reasons for the extension. *(5 CCR 4630)*
4. When a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) is filed anonymously, the compliance officer shall pursue an investigation or other response as appropriate, depending on the specificity and reliability of the information provided and the seriousness of the allegation.
5. When the complainant or alleged victim of unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying) requests confidentiality, the compliance officer shall inform him/her that the request may limit the district's ability to investigate the conduct or take other necessary action. When honoring a request for confidentiality, the district shall nevertheless take all reasonable steps to investigate and resolve/respond to the complaint consistent with the request.
6. If a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, district staff shall assist him/her in the filing of the complaint. *(5 CCR 4600)*

Step 2: Investigation of the Complaint

Upon receipt of the written complaint, the 60-calendar-day limit for the complaint resolution begins. Within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the formal written complaint, the compliance officer shall conduct an investigation into the charge.

Upon initiating the investigation, the compliance officer shall provide the complainant and/or his/her representative with the opportunity to present the information contained in the complaint to the compliance officer and shall notify the complainant and/or his/her representative of the opportunity to present the compliance officer with any evidence, or information leading to evidence, to support the allegations in the complaint. Such evidence or information may be presented at any time during the investigation.

In conducting the investigation, the compliance officer shall collect all available documents and review all available records, notes, or statements related to the complaint, including any additional evidence or information received from the parties during the course of the investigation. He/she shall individually interview all available witnesses with information pertinent to the complaint, and may visit any reasonably accessible location where the relevant actions are alleged to have taken place. To investigate a complaint alleging retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), the compliance officer shall interview the alleged victim(s), any alleged offenders, and other relevant witnesses privately, separately, and in a confidential manner. As necessary, additional staff or legal counsel may conduct or support the investigation.

A complainant's refusal to provide the district's investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation, or engagement

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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. (5 CCR 4631)

In accordance with law, the district shall provide the investigator with access to records and other information related to the allegation in the complaint and shall not in any way obstruct the investigation. Failure or refusal of the district to cooperate in the investigation may result in a finding based on evidence collected that a violation has occurred and in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant. (5 CCR 4631)

The compliance officer shall apply a "preponderance of the evidence" standard in determining the veracity of the factual allegations in a complaint. This standard is met if the allegation is more likely to be true than not.

Step 3: Report of Finding

The Report of Findings shall be written in English and, if applicable, the primary language of the complainant. The Superintendent or designee shall issue to the complainant the investigative report. The district's decision on how it will resolve the complaint shall be in writing and shall be sent to the complainant. (5 CCR 4631)

The written report of the district's investigation will include (5 CCR 4631):

1. The findings of fact based on evidence gathered. In reaching a factual determination, the following factors may be taken into account:
 - a. Statements made by any witnesses
 - b. The relative credibility of the individuals involved
 - c. How the complaining individual reacted to the incident
 - d. Any documentary or other evidence relating to the alleged conduct
 - e. Past instances of similar conduct by any alleged offenders
 - f. Past false allegations made by the complainant
2. Conclusion of law
3. Disposition of the complaint
4. The rationale for the above disposition

For complaints of retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), the disposition of the complaint shall include a determination for each allegation as to whether retaliation or unlawful discrimination has occurred.

The determination of whether a hostile environment exists may involve consideration of the following:

1. How the misconduct affected one or more students' education
2. The type, frequency, and duration of the misconduct
3. The relationship between the alleged victim(s) and offender(s)
4. The number of persons engaged in the conduct and at whom the conduct was directed
5. The size of the school, location of the incidents, and context in which they occurred
6. Other incidents at the school involving different individuals

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7. Corrective action(s), including any actions that have been or will be taken to address the allegations in the complaint including, with respect to a student fees complaint, a remedy that comports with Education Code 49013 and 5 CCR 4600

In a discrimination complaint, notice of complainant's right to seek civil law remedies at least sixty (60) calendar days after filing an appeal with the California Department of Education.

For complaints of unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), the decision may, as required by law, include:

1. The corrective actions imposed on the individual found to have engaged in the conduct that relate directly to the subject of the complaint
2. Individual remedies offered or provided to the subject of the complaint
3. Systemic measures the school has taken to eliminate a hostile environment and prevent recurrence

Notice of the complainant's right to appeal the district's decision within 15 calendar days to the CDE and procedures to be followed for initiating such an appeal. The decision may also include follow-up procedures to prevent recurrence or retaliation and for reporting any subsequent problems.

For complaints alleging unlawful discrimination based on state law (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, and bullying), the decision shall also include a notice to the complainant that:

1. He/she may pursue available civil law remedies outside of the district's complaint procedures, including seeking assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys, 60 calendar days after the filing of an appeal with the CDE. (*Education Code 262.3*)
2. The 60-day moratorium does not apply to complaints seeking injunctive relief in state courts or to discrimination complaints based on federal law. (*Education Code 262.3*)
3. Complaints alleging discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender, disability, or age may also be filed with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights at www.ed.gov/ocr within 180 days of the alleged discrimination.

Attempts to resolve the complaint through mediation may occur during this 30-calendar-day investigative period if all parties agree.

Unless extended by written agreement with the complainant, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report, as described in the section "Final Written Decision" below, within 60 calendar days of the district's receipt of the complaint. (*5 CCR 4631*)

Corrective Actions

When a complaint is found to have merit, the compliance officer shall adopt any appropriate corrective action permitted by law. Appropriate corrective actions that focus on the larger school or district environment may include, but are not limited to, actions to reinforce district policies; training for faculty, staff, and students; updates to school policies; or school climate surveys.

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For complaints involving retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), appropriate corrective actions that focus on the victim may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Counseling
2. Academic support
3. Health services
4. Assignment of an escort to allow the victim to move safely about campus
5. Information regarding available resources and how to report similar incidents or retaliation
6. Separation of the victim from any other individuals involved, provided the separation does not penalize the victim
7. Restorative justice
8. Follow-up inquiries to ensure that the conduct has stopped and there has been no retaliation
9. Determination of whether any past actions of the victim that resulted in discipline were related to the treatment the victim received and described in the complaint

For complaints involving retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), appropriate corrective actions that focus on a student offender may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Transfer from a class or school as permitted by law
2. Parent/guardian conference
3. Education regarding the impact of the conduct on others
4. Positive behavior support
5. Referral to a student success team
6. Denial of participation in extracurricular or co-curricular activities or other privileges as permitted by law
7. Disciplinary action, such as suspension or expulsion, as permitted by law

The district may also consider training and other interventions for the larger school community to ensure that students, staff, and parents/guardians understand the types of behavior that constitute unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), that the district does not tolerate it, and how to report and respond to it.

If a complaint alleging noncompliance with the laws regarding student fees, deposits, and other charges or any requirement related to the LCAP is found to have merit, the district shall provide a remedy to all affected students and parents/guardians subject to procedures established by regulation of the State Board of Education. (*Education Code 49013, 51223, 52075*)

For complaints alleging noncompliance with the laws regarding student fees, the district shall attempt in good faith, by engaging in reasonable efforts, to identify and fully reimburse all affected students and parents/guardians who paid the unlawful student fees within one year prior to the filing of the complaint. (*Education Code 49013; 5 CCR 4600*)

Any complainant who is dissatisfied with the district's final written decision may file an appeal in writing with the CDE within 15 calendar days of receiving the district's decision. (*Education Code 222, 48853, 48853.5, 49013, 49069.5, 51223, 51225.1, 51225.2, 51228.3, 52075; 5 CCR 4632*)

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The complainant shall 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 district's decision. *(5 CCR 4632)*

Upon notification by the CDE that the complainant has appealed the district's decision, the Superintendent or designee shall forward the following documents to the CDE: *(5 CCR 4633)*

1. A copy of the original complaint
2. A copy of the written decision
3. A summary of the nature and extent of the investigation conducted by the district, 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 the parties and gathered by the investigator
5. A report of any action taken to resolve the complaint
6. A copy of the district's uniform complaint procedures
7. Other relevant information requested by the CDE

Regulation

approved: October 1, 2003

Revised: July 13, 2010

Revised: September 4, 2012

Revised: November 6, 2012

Revised: December 11, 2012

Revised: May 3, 2016

Revised: August 23, 2016

SAN LUIS COASTAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

San Luis Obispo, California