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## 3.0 Grievances

### 3.1 Grievance Policy and Procedures

#### 3.2 Grievance Form

### 3.1 Grievance Policy and Procedures

Watershed Public Charter School places high value on open channels of communication throughout the school. Incorporating voices of students, parents and family members, staff and the extended community is one of WPCS' guiding principles, and we believe that embracing all aspects of diversity and inclusion works to the advantage of a cohesively-operated school.

In the event that a parent, staff member or other stakeholder has a concern about our school, we recommend following this series of progressive steps to voice their concern and work toward resolution. Staff members that have a bargaining unit within Baltimore County Public Schools are encouraged to use their Master Agreement prior to engaging in WPCS' Grievance Process. Conflict between students should be reported directly to the schoolhouse and issues of bullying should be reported via the BCPS Bullying Harassment and Intimidation Form. The WPCS Board will not conduct an investigation concurrently with the BCPS Board of Education for the purpose of the same grievance. If at any point, a member of TABCO, CASE or ESPBC chooses not to participate in the WPCS grievance process, it will not move forward. Grievants will still have the option of pursuing remediation with BCPS as a next step.

We strongly recommend that this process be followed *before* engaging with BCPS; however, the grievant may choose to follow whichever process they feel best serves them. The steps below must be addressed as a chain, with subsequent steps followed only when the grievant does not find satisfactory resolution in the previous step.

**Step 1. Contact the teacher, staff or community member.** It is critically important to have open lines of communication and to feel comfortable bringing concerns to the appropriate individual. If the issue is not resolved in Step 1, continue to Step 2.

**Step 2. Contact the Principal.** The Principal is the leader of the school and has the responsibility of overseeing all school staff. If the Principal does not resolve the issue satisfactorily, continue to Step 3.

**Step 3. Contact the Executive Director.** The Principal reports to the Executive Director. The Executive Director represents Watershed's Board of Directors, which has been granted authority by the Baltimore County School District to operate Watershed Public Charter School. The Executive Director will supply a grievance form and has 30 calendar days to attempt to resolve the grievance before it proceeds to Step 4.

**Step 4. If the grievant is not satisfied with the resolution provided in Steps 1-3, the Executive Director will bring the grievance to the board in closed session at the next available Board Meeting.** The Board of Directors is a group of representatives who have legal and financial responsibility for the school's operation, and who broadly oversee WPCS' operation. If a grievance is brought to the Board of Directors, the Board President will appoint an ad hoc Grievance Committee of **three Board members** to hear and review the concern. The Board will make their best effort to a) avoid including individuals with direct conflicts of interest, and b) include individuals with subject-matter expertise relevant to the grievance (i.e. special education, curriculum, climate, etc).

### **The Grievance Committee**

The Grievance Committee will provide an opinion to the involved parties which should be impartial and take into account the testimony of the aggrieved stakeholder, the Principal, and any other involved party. The committee's decision should be reached through thoughtful deliberation and lead to an outcome that is understood and accepted by all parties. The committee will either agree or disagree with the administrator's decision, assigned consequence, or recommendation regarding the situation in question. The committee's decision and any resulting action taken must be within the Board's purview. It is not the responsibility of the Grievance Committee to deliberate over policy or personal observations, issue consequences, or judgements of behavior.

### **Grievance Committee Proceedings**

1. The Grievance Committee will form and schedule a meeting within 30 days of the filing of the grievance.
2. The Committee Chair/Board President shall distribute a copy of the grievance and any related documentation among the committee as soon as it is formed.
3. A Grievance Committee meeting should encompass opportunities for the grievant and the concerned parties to offer a written statement, with the option of a short (five minute) verbal statement as well.
4. If any details of the situation are unclear, committee members should ask thoughtful and appropriate questions of both parties in order to reach clarity.

5. If the committee requires more information in order to reach a decision, the committee may request additional information from the aggrieved or administrator after the meeting and, if necessary, schedule an additional brief meeting or conference call with the committee if more discussion time is needed.
6. Within one week of the meeting, the Chair of the Grievance Committee shall present written notification to the aggrieved party of the committee's decision. The school administration shall be copied on this correspondence.
7. The written notification to the aggrieved should include a reminder that if the aggrieved is not satisfied or disagrees with the committee's decision, they are within their right to pursue their grievance further with Baltimore County Public Schools, and provided with information on how to do so.
8. All documentation related to the grievance proceeding (copy of the grievance, copy of the committee's decision and any other documentation) shall be filed electronically on the Board of Director's Google Drive site.

## 3.2 Grievance Form

### I. Contact Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### II. Complainant

You are filing this complaint on behalf of: \_\_\_\_\_

yourself    your child or a (student)    another student    a group

### III. School Information

Watershed Public Charter School  
Lori Widney, Principal  
6946 Dogwood Rd.  
Windsor Mill, MD 21244

### IV. Basis of Complaint or Concern:

Please check the following box(es), based on the type(s) of grievance you are filing:

Complaint related to:

Discrimination    Harassment    Discipline    Communication  
 WPCS Policy    Other (please describe below)

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### V. Details of Complaint

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Attach additional sheets of paper if you need more space.

1. Please **describe** the event or action about which you wish to bring a formal grievance, in as much detail as possible:

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2. List the **people** involved in the event or action in question:

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3. List any **witnesses** of the incident:

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4. Describe the **location** where the incident occurred:

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5. Please list **all the date(s) and times** when the incident occurred or when the issue first came to your attention:

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6. **What steps**, if any, have you taken to resolve this issue before filing a complaint?

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Signature of person filing complaint

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Date

\*\*\*\*\* For Board Use Only \*\*\*\*\*

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Filed: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please provide a duplicate copy to the complainant.**