

## **River Montessori Charter School Grievance Policy – General Complaints**

It is the policy of River Montessori Charter School (RMCS) to maintain a positive and productive working and educational environment where the charter school is compliant with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Employees that have complaints against other employees or supervisors that do not involve complaints of discrimination or harassment or violations of law, are encouraged to first address the issue with the person directly using conflict resolution skills without the intervention of a supervisor or other School administrator.

RMCS has adopted this Grievance Policy – General Complaint Policy to address concerns about the RMCS generally or regarding specific employees. For complaints regarding harassment or perceived violations of state or federal laws, please refer to RMCS’ Policy Against Unlawful Harassment and/or RMCS’ Uniform Complaint Procedures. For all other complaints, the General Complaint form and accompanying procedures will be appropriate.

### **OVERALL PROCEDURES FOR ALL GENERAL COMPLAINTS**

It is the policy of the RMCS Board of Directors that all grievances shall be resolved as close to their source as possible. All members of the school community, and all outside parties involved in a dispute are encouraged to deal directly with the other parties involved. Any grievance shall only move to a higher level of authority after direct communication between those initially involved has failed to produce a resolution.

The RMCS Board further holds that any party with a grievance should be able to find satisfaction in the resolution of their grievance. All members of the school community, as well as the Positive Resolution Committee, will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to reach a solution that is acceptable to all parties involved.

### **THE POSITIVE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE**

#### Composition:

The Positive Resolution Committee shall be composed entirely of River Montessori Charter School Board Directors and may have as many members as the Board sees fit.

#### Authority and Role:

The role of the Positive Resolution Committee is to review a complaint that has not been resolved at the staff or administrative levels, and to provide mediation where appropriate. The committee must balance its duty to protect the interests of the Charter and the school as a whole with the concerns of the party filing the complaint. In general, it is the opinion of the Board of Directors that the interests of the school and those of the individuals within should coincide if viewed from an appropriate distance. It is the responsibility of this committee to find and take such a view. In

cases where the parties fail to reconcile their differences through this process, the committee can make recommendations to any party for corrective action. In cases where the committee feels the scope of the dispute warrants an opinion of the full board, the committee will present the case to the board and request a vote.

To these ends, the Positive Resolution Committee is authorized by the full RMCS Board of Directors to review the conduct, relative to a specific complaint, of all employees and representatives of the River Montessori Charter School. The Positive Resolution Committee shall be authorized to make recommendations designed to resolve existing complaints (and to avoid future complaints) regarding staff conduct and educational policies. The Committee shall also have the authority to review the actions of any parent, student, or any other individual or group involved in a formal written complaint.

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES – FOR COMPLAINTS GENERALLY**

(General Complaints and Complaints by Third Parties against Employees)

This section of the policy is for use when either a complaint does not fall under other complaint procedures or a third party (non-employee) raises a complaint or concern about RMCS generally, or a RMCS employee.

If a parent, guardian, or other individual or group has a complaint that is not due to unlawful behavior, they should first contact those directly involved in the issue or decision to discuss the pertinent facts. With issues relating to students, begin by speaking with the teacher. Communicate the complaint as clearly as possible, and identify actions that will lead to a resolution of the issue. Work in a cooperative environment to resolve the complaint based upon the actions identified.

If the complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily, the complainant will speak with the Director and develop a plan with a timeline to resolve the issue. With issues relating to students, this plan may warrant input from the teacher. At the meeting, the complainant may appear alone or be accompanied by a mutually acceptable person. The other party (subject of the complaint) shall have the same privilege and may request a member of the Montessori Leadership Committee to be present. Any such plan may require review and revision during the process. The Director will document the facts involved in the dispute and this documentation may be reviewed by the Positive Resolution Committee.

If such a complaint remains unresolved after providing the School Director with 10 school days, the complainant (the parent, guardian, or other individual or group) may choose to notify the chair of the Positive Resolution Committee, with the objective of arriving at a mutually satisfactory resolution of the grievance.

The formal complaint should be in writing and document: 1) The nature of the grievance; 2) If any suggestions to resolve the grievance were made by the School Director/staff; 3) Why the complainant believes this remedy is inappropriate (if applicable); and 4) What remedy the complainant is seeking. Each party named in the complaint will receive a copy of the complaint.

The Positive Resolution Committee shall be briefed of grievances that have been brought to the Director. The Director shall keep a written record of the complaints by parents, student, staff and board along with the follow-up and conclusions.

## **INTERNAL COMPLAINTS**

(Complaints by Employees against Employees)

This section of the policy is for use when a RMCS 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 Director or designee:

1. The complainant will bring the matter to the attention of the Director as soon as possible after attempts to resolve the complaint with the immediate supervisor have failed or if not appropriate; and
2. The complainant will reduce his or her complaint to writing, indicating all known and relevant facts. The Director or designee will then investigate the facts and provide a solution or explanation.
3. If the complaint is about the Director, the complainant may file his or her complaint in a signed writing to the Chair of the RMCS Board of Directors, 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, RMCS values each employee's ability to express concerns and the need for resolution without fear of adverse consequence to employment.

## **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 Director) or the 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.

**Adopted: October 19, 2010**

**Amended: June 28, 2016**

**COMPLAINT FORM**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Alleged Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person(s) you have a complaint against: \_\_\_\_\_

List any witnesses that were present: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident(s) occur?

Please describe the circumstances, events, or conduct that are the basis of your complaint by providing as much factual detail as possible (i.e. specific statements; what, if any, physical contact was involved; any verbal statements; what did you do to avoid the situation, etc.) (Attach additional pages, if needed):

I hereby authorize the River Montessori Charter School to disclose the information I have provided as it finds necessary in pursuing its investigation. I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true and correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further understand providing false information in this regard could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

To be completed by River Montessori Charter School:

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

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