

Grievance Procedure

Introductory comment: Longstanding policy has defined the board as the final arbiter for unsatisfied grievances, after they have already been through the prescribed route of teacher, supervisor, head of school as defined in the student/staff handbooks. This appendix defines how the board deals with grievances after they have-traveled up the appropriate "chain of command."

Grievance Policy Objective: to have a process that provides for fair hearing and potential action, without allowing grievances to dominate board activities

BASIC LOGISTICS:

Types of grievances: staff or parent or teacher.

The purpose of the Grievance Committee is to provide an initial "filtering" mechanism to determine which issues should be brought before the full board.

Grievance Committee will have at least five members, and will be comprised of:

- board chair, who serves as committee chair
- 2 or more other board members (who are not IHS parents)
- 2 or more members who are not board members, from the following groups:
 - o not more than one IHS parent
 - o not more than one IHS teacher
 - o not more than two people who are none of the above, but have an abiding interest in IHS

It is expected that all Committee members will have a thorough understanding of existing board and school policies, and ready access to all relevant policy documents.

Composition of the Committee will ensure that board members always form a majority.

Committee members may be nominated by anyone, and must be approved by a majority vote of all board members present at the board meeting when the Committee is created. Other than the board President, who by definition is always on the Committee, membership will be for one year, and can be renewed for one year, such that no one serves more than two consecutive years. The Committee will be "repopulated" once per year, on the same exact cycle as board membership is renewed. If a member resigns from the Committee, the board will fill the position at the next board meeting, and no grievances will be heard unless Committee composition follows the rules outlined above.

PROCEDURE:

1. A grievance must be submitted in writing to the board Chair, either by mail or to the email address. It must include a request for specific remedy, and must have followed the established "chain of command" before it is accepted by the Chair (the Chair must confirm this with Administration). That chain is again, in ascending order, teacher, supervisor, Head of School, Board Chair.
2. The board Chair will immediately:
 - a. send the grievance to all board members
 - b. reply in writing (mail or email) to the complainant with a Grievance Committee meeting date & time
 - c. send the grievance letter/email to all Committee members for review

Grievance Committee meeting schedule: The Committee should meet only if there is a grievance to be heard. It should be within a reasonable amount of time of the initial filing, and could be on a pre-ordained day, like the Monday or Tuesday before the board meeting. No more than one board meeting should take place between the filing and the Grievance Committee meeting. The existing employee agreement indicates that grievances will be addressed within 10 days, so this timeframe should be honored if possible.

3. GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

- a. The sole function of the Committee is to decide whether or not a grievance should be advanced to the full board.

A grievance should be advanced to the full board when the Committee judges that there has been a clear violation of the law, or board or administration policy as defined by the Board Policy Manual, the parent-student handbook, the employee handbook, the Head of School's internal policies manual and any policy documents referenced therein. The board's role is to ensure that the Head of School acts within the realm of these established policy documents..

- b. The Committee meeting is the designated opportunity for full and open dialogue. As such, all involved parties should be, but are not required to be, present so that the Committee can ask questions and gather data to make a well-informed decision. While this meeting is intended to be an open dialogue, it will be subject to Robert's Rules of Order, and it is expected that appropriate decorum will be observed. The Chair will have the right to take any action necessary to ensure this, including asking a participant to leave, stopping discussion of an issue, terminating the meeting, etc.

- including any Committee-recommended course of action.
- ii. After board discussion, a motion will be made to achieve one of the four possible outcomes described below.
- iii. The floor will be opened for public comment. The complainant and other involved parties will be allowed to make statements.
- iv. No response/dialogue from the board is required, but it should not be precluded.
- v. After-public comment and discussion, the board will vote on the motion. Alternate motions will be allowed and considered, as usual, during this process.

Since the issue has reached board level, it is understood that the board acknowledges the grievance. There are four possible outcomes than can be defined by a board motion. The board can:

1. accept the complainant's remedy as proposed, and instruct Administration to take specific action
2. instruct Administration to implement a different remedy, as recommended by the Grievance Committee or as determined by the full board
3. reject the proposed remedy, but refer the issue to the Governance Committee with instructions for policy development
4. reject the complainant's proposed remedy outright

An important principle is that the board makes no recommendation to Administration for action unless it has been determined that a policy has been violated. It is our hope that the process in and of itself will be instructive, and Administration may modify future behavior accordingly. In theory, most issues that rise to the level of board involvement should result in a "tighter" operation and better governing policies in the future.

- vi. The result of the motion, and any related actions stipulated by the board, will be documented in detail by the board Secretary, to be recorded permanently in board meeting minutes.
- vii. After the board meeting, the President will communicate in writing (by mail or email) the final outcome to all involved parties.