



STEM Preparatory Schools, Inc.
(for Crown Preparatory Academy and Math and Science College Preparatory School)
Uniform Complaint Procedure - Policy

STEM Preparatory Schools, Inc. (STEM Prep, Inc.) operates Crown Preparatory Academy (CPA) and Math and Science College Preparatory School (MSCP) has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and shall investigate complaints alleging failure to comply with those laws and regulations alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying and unauthorized charging of pupil fees for educational activities, among other matters. STEM Prep, Inc. shall seek to resolve those complaints in accordance with the procedures set out in Sections 4600-4687 of the Title 5 Regulations and the policies and procedures of STEM Prep, Inc.

This Policy clarifies that the Uniform Complaint Procedure (UCP) may be used to report non-compliance of applicable state and federal laws and regulations; file complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying; or, unauthorized charging of pupil fees for educational activities among other matters; and/or to appeal school decisions regarding such complaints. UCP brochures are available at the school site in the primary languages of the school community. Complainants are encouraged, where possible, to try to resolve their complaints directly at the school site.

A copy of this UCP policy shall be available free of charge.

The following guidelines apply.

I. BACKGROUND

The UCP complaint is a written statement alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student based on the actual or perceived categories set forth in Penal Code 422.5 and Education Code §220 which includes: actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race or ethnicity, ethnic group identification, ancestry, nationality, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disability, age, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, in any program or activity it conducts or to which it provides significant assistance, or a violation of a federal or state

law or regulation.

A UCP complaint must be filed by way of the Uniform Complaint Procedures as written in the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, sections 4600-4687. Issues that may involve filing a complaint using the UCP are under various state and federal programs that use categorical funds.

A pupil shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity, unless the charge for such a fee is specifically authorized by law and does not violate Education Code 49011. A complaint of noncompliance should be filed first with the principal of the school under the Uniform Complaint Procedures. A complainant not satisfied with the decision of the school may appeal the decision to STEM Prep, Inc.'s UCP Coordinator and shall receive a written appeal decision within 60 days of receipt of the school site complaint.

By July 1, 2014 and annually thereafter, districts must develop a Local Control and Accountability Plan that aligns with their annual budget and identifies actions they will take to meet state priorities pertaining to teacher qualifications, implementation of the Common Core State Standards, parental involvement, student achievement, student engagement, school climate, student access to the course of study and student outcomes. AB 97 requires that the plan be developed through a process that includes consultation with teachers, principals, other administrators, other school personnel, parents and students. Once the plan is developed, it must be posted on the district website and submitted to the county superintendent of schools. Complaints of noncompliance regarding plan development must be addressed through uniform complaint procedures.

II. UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES PROCESS JURISDICTION

A. Complaints Under the Jurisdiction of STEM Prep, Inc.'s Uniform Complaint Procedures Process:

1. Discrimination, Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying
 - a) Employee to student
 - b) Student to student
 - c) Third party to student

2. Various State and Federal Programs that use Categorical Funds
 - a) Title I, Title II, Title III
 - b) Title V (Public Charter School Grant Program)
 - c) Mandate Block Grant
 - d) Schools and Libraries Program, Universal Service Fund (E-Rate)
 - e) After School Program
 - f) BTSA
 - g) State Lottery

- h) SB 740 Charter School Facility Grant
 - i) Consolidated Categorical Aid
 - j) Child Nutrition
 - k) Special Education
 - l) SB 81 - Adult Education and Regional Occupational Centers and Programs
 - m) AB 302 - Pupil Services: Lactation Accommodations
 - n) AB 379 - Educational Rights of Foster and Homeless Students
 - o) AB 1012 - Pupil Instruction: Course Periods Without Educational Content
 - p) AB 1391 - Physical Education Instructional Minutes
3. Noncompliance with Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
- a) Plan must align to school's annual budget and identifies actions they will take to meet state priorities pertaining to teacher qualifications, implementation of the Common Core State Standards, parental involvement, student achievement, student engagement, school climate, student access to the course of study and student outcomes.
 - b) Development process must include teachers, principals, other administrators, other school personnel, parents and students.
 - c) Plan must be posted on the school website.
4. Unauthorized Charging of Pupil Fees* for Educational Activities
- a) A school pupil shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity.
 - b) All supplies, materials, and equipment needed to participate in educational activities shall be provided to pupils free of charge.
- * "Pupil fee" means a fee, deposit, or other charge imposed on pupils, or a pupil's parents or guardians, in violation of CA Ed. Code 49011 and Section 5 of Article IX of the California Constitution.

B. Complaints Not Under the Jurisdiction of STEM Prep, Inc. UCP Process:

- 1. Allegations of suspected child abuse shall be referred to the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or the appropriate city police department or Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, as applicable.
- 2. Allegations of fraud shall be referred to the Fraud Hotline.
- 3. Personnel action complaints shall be referred to the responsible supervisor.

4. Bullying complaints that are not based on a protected class/ characteristics may be referred to the school site Title IX/Bullying Complaint Manager.

III. RELATED DEFINITIONS

Title 5, California Code of Regulations provides the following definitions:

- A. Appeal: A request made in writing to a level higher than the original reviewing level by an aggrieved party requesting reconsideration or a reinvestigation of the lower adjudicating body's decision.
- B. Complainant: An individual, including a person's duly authorized representative or an interested third party, public agency, or organization who files a written complaint alleging a violation of federal or state laws or regulations, including allegations of discrimination in programs and activities funded directly by the state or receiving any financial assistance from the state.
- C. Complaint: A written and signed statement alleging a violation of federal or state laws or regulations, which may include an allegation of discrimination. If the complainant is unable to put the complaint in writing, due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, the public agency shall assist the complainant in the filing of the complaint.
- D. Complaint Investigation: Administrative process used by STEM Prep, Inc., the California Department of Education (CDE) or local educational agency for the purpose of gathering data regarding the complaint.
- E. Complaint Procedure: An internal process used by the CDE or local educational agency to process and resolve complaints.
- F. Compliance Agreement: An agreement or plan, following a finding of school noncompliance with state laws and regulations, which has been developed by STEM Prep, Inc. and approved by the CDE to resolve a noncompliance issue.
- G. Days: Calendar days, unless designated otherwise.
- H. Direct State Intervention: The steps taken by the CDE to initially investigate complaints or effect compliance.
- I. Local Agency: A school governing board or a local public or private agency which receives direct or indirect funding or any other financial assistance from the state to provide any school programs or activities or special education or related services.

J. Mediation: A problem-solving activity whereby a third party assists the parties to the dispute in resolving the complaint.

K. State Mediation Agreement: A written, voluntary agreement, approved by the California Department of Education, which is developed by the parties to the dispute, which resolves the allegations of the complaint.

IV. NOTIFICATION — DISSEMINATION

A written notice regarding UCP must be disseminated annually to staff, students, parents/guardians, school advisory committees, and other interested school parties. Distribution may be in any form (brochure, newsletter, memorandum, staff/parent/student handbook, etc.) that will reach the school community.

V. CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-RETALIATION

Complaints shall be handled in a confidential manner to respect the privacy of all parties to the fullest extent possible. Every effort shall be made to limit the distribution of information to those persons with a need to know within the confines of STEM Prep, Inc.'s reporting procedures and investigative process.

STEM Prep, Inc. prohibits retaliation in any form for the filing of a complaint or an appeal, reporting instances of non-compliance, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or for participation in the complaint-filing or investigation process. These confidentiality and non-retaliation requirements extend to all parties involved.

VI. FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

A. Complaint Filing

1. Any individual, public agency or organization may file a written complaint, alleging a matter which, if true, would constitute a violation by STEM Prep, Inc. of federal or state laws or regulations governing its programs and activities as well as allegations of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying identified in Section II.A.1-3 of this document.
2. Complaints regarding pupil fees (Section II.A.4) should be filed with the school principal.
3. Any parent/guardian/individual/organization has the right to file a written complaint of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying within six months from the date the alleged incident occurred or the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged incident.

4. A complainant who makes a verbal complaint shall be referred to the administrator/designee who will assist any person with a disability or unable to prepare a written complaint.
5. The complainant will submit a written complaint to the Complaint Manager:

Eric Barlow, Chief Operations Officer
STEM Preparatory Schools, Inc.
3200 W. Adams Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90018
Telephone: (323) 795-0695

This Complaint Manager shall be considered the representative of STEM Prep, Inc. for purposes of receiving and coordinating responses to complaints and correspondence related to this policy.

STEM Prep, Inc. ensures the administrator/designee assigned to investigate complaints is knowledgeable about the laws/programs that he/she is assigned to investigate and is responsible for compliance. In addition, the administrator/designee responsible for providing a written report should be a person trained in the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) investigative process. As such, this designee must have knowledge of federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to Uniform Complaint Procedures.

6. STEM Prep, Inc. shall include an opportunity for the complainant, or the complainant's representative, or both, to present the complaint(s) and evidence or information leading to evidence to support the allegations of non-compliance with state and federal laws and/or regulations. Refusal by the complainant to provide the investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, or to otherwise fail or refuse to cooperate in the investigation or engage in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegations.

Refusal by STEM Prep, Inc. to provide the investigator with access to records and/or other information related to the allegation in the complaint, or to otherwise fail or refuse to cooperate in the investigation or engage in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in a finding based on evidence collected that a violation has occurred and may result in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant.

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B. Complaint Receipt

The Complaint Manager shall:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint and review the complaint to determine whether it meets the criteria for filing under the procedures or falls within the exceptions listed in Section II.B.
2. Inform the complainant of STEM Prep, Inc. policy and appeal procedures in those instances when a complaint may be filed with the school principal, other school agency/designee, or directly with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction or another appropriate state or federal agency.
3. Determine whether the complainant and the school representative will participate in mediation to resolve the complaint prior to formal investigation. If the complainant agrees to the mediation, he/she must be informed that he/she may at any time terminate the mediation process and proceed directly to an investigation. Mediation may not extend the timeline for investigation and resolution to the complaint unless the complainant agrees, in writing, to the extension.
4. Determine whether a discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying complaint has been filed within six months from the date the alleged incident occurred or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged incident. Confidentiality of complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be observed to the maximum extent possible.
5. Deny the discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying complaint if it has not been filed in a timely manner, and notify the complainant of his/her right to appeal to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for an extension of time in which to file the complaint.
6. Refer the complaint for investigation to the appropriate school office.
7. Ensure that, within 60 days of receipt of the written complaint, the complaint has been resolved and/or investigated and that a written report of findings is issued to the complainant. The written report of the investigative findings must contain the allegation(s), method of investigation, policy, findings, conclusion(s), and corrective action(s), if applicable.

8. Obtain an extension of time, if appropriate, in order to conduct the investigation.

C. Complaint Timeline

1. Each complaint shall be resolved and a written report of investigative findings issued within 60 days of the receipt of the written complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of time.
2. If the complainant agrees to mediation, it may not extend the timeline for investigation and resolution to the complaint unless the complainant agrees, in writing, to the extension.

D. Complaint Investigation

Each complaint shall be investigated by the appropriate school office. The school office shall :

1. Adhere to a 30 day timeline to request additional information from the complainant as necessary, conduct the investigation, and prepare the final written report of findings.
2. Provide an opportunity for the complainant and/or the complainant's representative and the school's representative to present information that is relevant to the complaint during the mediation or investigative process. Refusal by the complainant to provide the investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, or to otherwise fail or refuse to cooperate in the investigation or engage in any other obstruction of the investigation may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegations.
3. Obtain statements from other individuals who were witnesses or can provide relevant information concerning the alleged violation.
4. Review documents that may provide information relevant to the alleged violation. When necessary, request clarification on specific issues of the complaint from other school offices.
5. Have access to applicable school records and/or other information related to the allegation(s) in the complaint. School units or staff who refuse or otherwise fail to cooperate in the investigation or engage in any other obstruction of the investigation, may cause a finding, based on evidence collected, that a violation has occurred and may result in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant.

6. Prepare a written report (in English and in the language of the complainant) of the investigative findings which contains the following elements:
 - a) The findings of fact based on the evidence gathered
 - b) Conclusion of law
 - c) Disposition of the complaint
 - d) The rationale for the disposition
 - e) Corrective actions, if any, that are warranted
 - f) Notice of the complainant's right to appeal STEM Prep, Inc.'s decision to the CDE
 - g) Procedures to be followed for initiating an appeal to the CDE
7. Within 30 days of receipt of the complaint, forward a draft of the written report of investigative findings to the Complaint Manager for review and final disposition.

E. Complaint Response

1. The Complaint Manager will complete and provide the closing letter, along with the written report of investigative findings, to the complainant and to the appropriate administrator/designee.
2. The closing letter provided to the complainant must include the assurance that STEM Prep, Inc. will not tolerate retaliation against the complainant for opposing school actions, reporting, or threatening to report such actions or for the complainant's participation in an investigation of school actions.
3. The closing letter provided to the complainant must also include notice of the complainant's right to appeal STEM Prep, Inc.'s decision. Decisions regarding programs listed in Section II.A. may be appealed within 15 days to the Complaint Manager and/or to the California Department of Education.

VII. APPEALS

A. Appeals of STEM Prep, Inc. Decisions Regarding Allegations of Discrimination and/or Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

1. Appeals of school decisions and/or findings regarding allegations of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying listed in this document (found in Section II.A.1) may be appealed to the California Department of Education (CDE) — Office of Equal Opportunity by filing a written appeal within 15 days after receiving STEM Prep, Inc.'s decision.

- a) The written appeal should specify the reason(s) for appealing the decision and include a copy of STEM Prep, Inc.'s decision.
- b) Appeals of school decisions regarding allegations of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying may be sent to: California Department of Education Office for Equal Opportunity 1430 N Street, Suite 4206 Sacramento, CA 95814

B. Appeals of STEM Prep, Inc. Decisions Regarding Educational Program Complaints

- 1. Appeals of school decisions and/or findings regarding educational programs listed in this document (found in Section II.A.2) may be appealed to the California Department of Education (CDE) - Categorical Programs Complaints Management by filing a signed written appeal within 15 days after receiving STEM Prep, Inc.'s decision.

- a) The written appeal should specify the reason(s) for appealing the decision and include a copy of STEM Prep, Inc.'s decision.

- b) Appeals of school decisions regarding educational program complaints should be sent to:
California Department of Education
Categorical Programs Complaints Management Office
1430 N Street, Suite 6408
Sacramento, CA 95814

C. Appeals of STEM Prep, Inc. Decisions Regarding Special Education Compliance

- 1. Appeals of STEM Prep, Inc. decisions and/or findings regarding special education compliance may be filed with the California Department of Education (CDE) - Special Education Division by sending a written appeal within 15 days after receiving STEM Prep, Inc. decision.

- a) The written appeal should specify the reason(s) for appealing the decision and include a copy of STEM Prep, Inc. decision.

- b) Appeals of STEM Prep, Inc. decisions regarding special education compliance should be sent to:
California Department of Education
Procedural Safeguards Referral Service
1430 N Street, Suite 2401
Sacramento, CA 95814

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VIII. CIVIL REMEDIES

- A. Pursuant to California Education Code 262.3, persons who have filed a complaint, under the UCP, should be advised that civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders may also be available to them.
- B. Complainants should be advised of the right to pursue civil law remedies under California or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying laws.

AUTHORITY:

This is a policy of the STEM Prep, Inc. Board of Directors. The following legal standard is applied to this policy: California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Sections 4600-4687.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A - UCP Complaint Form - English
- Attachment B - UCP Complaint Form - Spanish
- UCP Annual Notice - English
- UCP Annual Notice - Spanish