

DRAFT FOR BOARD REVIEW May 21, 2020

Second Reading

UChicago Charter School Parent/Guardian Complaint Procedure

At UChicago Charter School (UCCS), we value our families and support ongoing dialogue regarding your ideas, concerns and complaints. We believe that the quality of the UCCS educational program can improve when the school actively listens to concerns, considers differences of opinion, and resolves disagreements through an established, objective process.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the campus level when appropriate. We seek a quick and comprehensive campus-based approach so that only the most critical matters get elevated.

All parties should present themselves in a fair and respectful manner at all times following the Family, Student and School Agreements (pages 40-42) in the 2019-2020 UCCS Student and Family Handbook.

The goal of this UCCS Parent/Guardian Complaint Process is to provide an avenue for parents and families to work with school leadership to quickly resolve school-based concerns. This Complaint Process builds on the Parent Complaint Section in the UCCS Student and Family Handbook, (see Section X at page 39), and provides a detailed step-by-step process for handling complaints.

In addition to the process outlined below, both the UChicago Charter School Board of Directors and the UChicago Charter School Advisory Council, hold public meetings on a quarterly basis. Each meeting includes a public participation section on the agenda. All individuals with concerns, ideas and/or complaints are encouraged to attend these meetings. Three minutes are provided to each speaker. A list of the meeting dates can be found in the 2019-2020 Student and Family Handbook and on the UCCS website calendar for your convenience.

STEP 1 – Resolving Complaints by Meeting, Phone Calls and Conferences

If you have a complaint about classroom activities, please start by contacting your child’s teacher. If you have a complaint about school rules, please start by contacting the school Director. UChicago Charter School encourages parents to first discuss their concerns and complaints through an informal conference with the appropriate teacher, Campus Director, Assistant Director, or other campus staff member directly involved in the matter.

UCCS will make every effort to confirm that we have received your complaint, and set up a meeting (in person or via telephone), within 48 hours of hearing of your complaint.

The next step will be this phone call or meeting. If this call or meeting, sometimes called an “informal conference,” is not satisfactory, the parent may proceed to Step 2 – a written complaint.

STEP 2 – Resolving a Written Complaint at the Campus Level

If the informal conference, call or meeting, fails to reach an outcome satisfactory to the parent, the parent may initiate a formal process by filing a written complaint, using the Complaint Form provided below. The parent should give a formal written complaint to the Campus Director.

Written complaints will be investigated promptly. Every attempt will be made to resolve the issue at the school level. Confirmation of the complaint and a meeting, (in person or via telephone), will be scheduled within two business days of receiving a written complaint. For example, a written complaint received on a Friday will receive a confirmation and a meeting by the next Tuesday.

If additional investigation is necessary, the campus leaders will inform the parent, and set a second meeting as soon as possible to resolve the issue.

Even after initiating the formal Written Complaint process, parents are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. A parent whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal written complaint at any time.

When a Written Complaint is resolved at the Campus level, the Campus Director will provide a written response to the parent, acknowledging that the matter has been resolved.

STEP 3 – Resolving a Written Complaint at the Network Level

If the complaint cannot be resolved at the campus level, an appeal may be made to the Chief Executive Officer of the UChicago Charter School. The Complaint Form, attached below, must be completed to initiate an investigation by the CEO. The CEO will send a confirmation of receipt of the written complaint within 48 hours of receipt, and will set a meeting to discuss the complaint with the parent in person or by phone.

The CEO will make every effort to resolve the complaint at this stage.

STEP 4 --- Resolving a Written Complaint at the Board of Directors Level

If the parent seeks to appeal the decision of the CEO in resolving the Written Complaint, the parent must submit the Written Complaint to the Board of Directors. The same Form below should be used, with any additional information added regarding (1) the campus response and (2) the CEO response. The Board of Directors will, within 48 hours, send confirmation of receipt, and will send notice of next steps, including any investigation, or meeting that the Board of Directors, acting through the Board's President, deems appropriate.

The resolution and decision of the Board of Directors, acting through its President, shall be final with regard to any written complaint.

Additional Information Regarding Special Types of Complaints.

UCCS Suspension and Expulsion Process

Some complaints may concern the proposed suspension or expulsion of a UCCS student. For your reference, the UCCS process for suspension and expulsion is set forth in the 2019-2020 Student and Family Handbook, Section III, page 43-55.

Reporting Title IX Sexual Misconduct Incidents

Some complaints may concern the alleged sexual misconduct of staff, students, or other stakeholders in the UCCS community. These are known as “Title IX” incidents. UCCS was required by the Chicago Public Schools to develop a new system in August 2019 for reporting and investigating Title IX incidents. The Campus Directors or Deans must simultaneously report Title IX incidents to CPS and to the UCCS Title IX Coordinator, Jeanne Nowaczewski, jnowaczewski@uchicago.edu or (773) 702-5693.

CPS will determine if there should be a school-based investigation or a CPS investigation. If a complaint raises Title IX concerns, it will be managed through this UCCS Title IX process. To learn more about Title IX and the UCCS policy against sexual misconduct, please consult the 2019-2020 Student and Family Handbook, Section V, pages 65-69.

Mandated Abuse and Neglect Reporting

Some complaints may concern alleged Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting, which is governed by the Illinois law: Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, (“ANCRA”). As a first step in reporting child abuse or neglect under ANCRA, please immediately call the ANCRA HOTLINE: (800) 25-ABUSE or (800) 252-2873.

Anti- Bullying Policy

Some complaints may include incidents of bullying. For more information regarding UCCS’ Anti-Bullying policy and the process to report bullying, please consult the UCCS Student & Family Handbook, Section III.F., pages 56-58

Conclusion

In conclusion, as noted above, UChicago Charter School values its families and students. We believe that the Complaint process outlined here will provide a fair hearing and appropriate resolution to complaints received. We look forward to working with our families and students on these and all issues of importance to the UChicago Charter School mission.

Draft Dated May 21, 2020

DRAFT COMPLAINT FORM

**UChicago Charter School Parent/Guardian/Student
Complaint Form for 2020
To be Submitted FIRST to the Campus Director**

Thank you for completing this Form. Your answers will help us investigate your concern.

Student's Name _____ Grade _____ Campus _____

Parent's Name _____ Telephone number _____

Date of incident _____

Description of the incident: (Please describe what concerns you in the space below.)

Has this incident been reported before? When? _____. (Please note date.)
To whom did you report it? _____. (Please note name & position.)
How did you report it? _____. (In-person, phone call, email?)

What course of action do you seek to resolve this complaint? (Please use the space below to describe what next steps you are asking for.)

Student/Parent/Guardian Signature

Date Form Submitted

Received by (For UCCS Staff Signature)

Date UCCS Received Form

Note to UCCS Staff: Please make a copy of the Completed Form after signing, and give the copy to the person completing the Form at that time.

Complaint Form UCCS 2020