

## **Student Concerns and Complaints**

### ***Board Policy (6.305)***

Decisions made by the school personnel-such as aides, teachers, or assistant principals-which students believe unfair or in violation of pertinent policies of the Board or individual school rules may be appealed to the school principal or designated representative. To appeal, students will contact the principal's office in their school and provide their name, the issue and the reason for their appeal on a printed form available at school office within two days. The appeal will usually be decided confidentially and promptly, preferably with ten (10) school days.

However, if the principal does not make a decision within ten (10) school days following the date of complaint, students or parents may appeal at that time by contacting the director of schools/designee at the central office. The information provided should include the students name, the school and a description of the problem.

An investigation and decision will be made within two (2) school days and communicated to the school principal and student by telephone. A written copy of the decision will be sent to the student and principal.

#### **DISCRIMINATION/HARRASSMENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

*Filing a Complaint-* Any student of the school district who wishes to file discrimination/harassment grievance against another student or employee of the district may file a written or oral (recorded, if possible) complaint with a complaint manager. Students may also report an allegation of discrimination/harassment to any teacher or other adult employed in the school who shall inform a complaint manager of the allegation. The complaint should include the following information:

- Identity of the alleged victim in person accused;**
- Location, date, time and circumstances surrounding the alleged incident;**
- Description of what happened;**
- Identity of witnesses; and**
- Any other evidence available.**

**Investigation-Within 24 hours** of receiving the students' complaint, the complaint manager shall **notify the complaining student's parent/guardian and principal who shall inform the director of schools.** *The parent/guardian shall be given notice of the right to attend an interview of the student in a non-intimidating environment in order to elicit full disclosure of the student's allegations. This interview shall take place within five days from the time the complaint was first made.* If no parent/guardian attends the interview, another adult, mutually agreed upon by the student and complaint manager, shall attend and may serve as the student's advocate.

**After completing the investigation, if the allegations are substantiated, immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated.** The complaint and any identity of the complainant will not be disclosed except (1) as required by law or this policy; or (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint; or (3) as authorized by the complainant. **A school representative will meet with and advise the complainant regarding the findings, and whether corrective measures and/or disciplinary actions were taken.** Investigation and response to the complainant will be completed within **thirty (30)** school days. **Copies of the report will be sent to the student, principal, Federal Rights Coordinator and director schools.** One copy shall be kept in the complaint manager's file for one (1) year beyond the student's 18th birthday. The director of schools should keep the Board informed of all complaints.

Decision and Appeal--if the complainant is not in agreement with the findings of fact as reported by the complaint manager, an appeal may be made, within five (5) work days to the director schools. The director schools will review the investigation, make any corrective action deemed necessary and provide a written response to the complainant. If the complainant is not in agreement with the director schools' findings of fact, appeal may be made to the Board of Education within five (5) work days. The Board shall, within thirty (30) days from the date the appeal was received, review the investigation and the actions of the director schools and may support, amend or overturn the actions based upon review and report their decision in writing to the complainant.

#### **APPOINTING COMPLAINT MANAGERS**

The Director/Superintendent of schools shall appoint at least two complaint managers, one of each gender for each school. The Federal Rights Coordinator may serve as a complaint manager. The director schools shall insert into this policy the names, addresses and telephone numbers of current complaint managers.

This policy shall be published in the parent/student handbook distributed annually to every student. Building administrators are responsible for educating and training their respective staff and students as to the definition and recognition of discrimination/harassment.

*For More information contact:  
District Complaint Officer for the Cocke County School System:  
Paul L. Cogburn  
305 Hedrick Drive  
Newport, TN 37821  
(423) 623-7821*

#### Legal References:

1. Title IX, Education Amendment of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.

#### Cross References:

Appeals To and Appearances before the Board 1.609  
Grievance is and the Americans with Disabilities Act 5.501  
Discrimination/Harassment of Students 6.305