

Virtus Academy of South Carolina Employee Grievance Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent structure through which employees of Virtus Academy of South Carolina (“VASC”) may seek resolution of specific employment-related concerns. This policy outlines the issues that may be grieved and the procedure by which grievances must be submitted and addressed.

Employees are expected to review this grievance policy in full, including the eligibility requirements, applicable timelines, and the appropriate officials to whom grievances must be directed.

This grievance policy may be utilized only by employees of VASC who are directly, adversely, and personally affected by the matter being grieved. A grievance may be filed only for one or more of the following reasons:

1. To address an alleged violation of applicable law or regulation that directly and adversely affects the aggrieved employee.
2. To address an alleged violation of VASC Board policy that directly and adversely affects the aggrieved employee.
3. To address an alleged violation of the VASC charter that directly and adversely affects the aggrieved employee.
4. To address alleged discrimination or harassment against the aggrieved employee based on one or more protected characteristic.

This policy does not apply to complaints made by individuals who are not employees, including but not limited to students, parents, guardians, community members, vendors, and contractors. This policy does not apply to a complaint filed by one employee on behalf of another employee. Additionally, this policy does not apply to general workplace complaints that do not involve a direct adverse effect on the grievant, as described herein.

An aggrieved employee has the right to be represented by legal counsel at the employee’s own expense.

If an aggrieved employee fails to meet any of the timelines set forth herein, the employee’s grievance may be denied by the VASC official(s) charged with investigating and deciding the grievance.

The VASC official(s) charged with investigating and deciding grievances are entitled to extend the timelines herein for investigation and issuing decisions if necessary to conduct a thorough and complete investigation into the grievance.

The provisions of Article 5, Chapter 25, Title 59 do not apply to the employment and dismissal of teachers or employees at VASC.

Step One: Informal Discussion

Subject to the following paragraph, the aggrieved employee must first initiate an informal discussion with the other person(s) involved in the incident giving rise to the grievance. This discussion must occur within ten (10) calendar days of the incident, or within ten (10) calendar days of the date when the aggrieved employee became aware of the incident. The purpose of the information discussion is to attempt to resolve the matter promptly and constructively without the need for a formal grievance.

Exception: If the grievance includes allegations of discrimination or harassment against the aggrieved employee, the aggrieved employee is not required to initiate an informal discussion with the person(s) allegedly discriminating against or harassing the aggrieved employee, and the aggrieved employee may proceed immediately to Step Two.

Step Two: Submit a Written Grievance

If the informal discussion does not resolve the aggrieved employee's concerns, the aggrieved employee must submit a completed Grievance Form within ten (10) calendar days following the informal discussion.

The Grievance Form must be submitted to the individual who is the nearest supervisor in the chain of command who has supervisory authority over both the aggrieved employee and any employee(s) alleged to have engaged in improper conduct.

The Grievance Form must include the following:

- (1) A detailed description of the grievance;
- (2) A summary of any actions already taken by the aggrieved employee to resolve the grievance; and
- (3) The specific relief or resolution requested.

An incomplete Grievance Form will be returned to the aggrieved employee for correction. Submission of an incomplete Grievance Form does not extend the required timeline for submission of a complete Grievance Form. Only the issues set forth in the Grievance Form shall be considered thereafter.

Upon receipt of a completed Grievance Form, the supervisor shall schedule a conference with the aggrieved employee and, in the supervisor's discretion, any other individual(s) necessary. The supervisor shall issue a written decision to the aggrieved employee within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the conference(s).

Exception: If the grievance includes allegations against the Executive Director, the Grievance Form must be submitted directly to the VASC Board of Directors. In such cases, the Board shall appoint a qualified individual to investigate and decide the grievance, subject to appeal to the Board pursuant to Step Four of this policy.

Step Three: Appeal to the Executive Director

If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the supervisor's written decision under Step Two, the aggrieved employee may submit a written appeal to the Executive Director within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the supervisor's written decision.

The written appeal must include:

- (1) A copy of the original Grievance Form;
- (2) A copy of the supervisor's written decision; and
- (3) A written explanation detailing why the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the supervisor's decision.

An appeal that does not contain such information will be considered incomplete and returned to the aggrieved employee to complete within the required timeline. Submission of an incomplete appeal does not extend the required timeline for submission of a complete appeal. Only the issues presented in the original Grievance Form and timely appeal shall be considered.

Upon receipt of a complete written appeal, the Executive Director may, at their discretion, schedule a conference with the aggrieved employee and any other individual(s) deemed necessary. The Executive Director shall issue a written decision to the aggrieved employee within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the conference(s), or in the event no conferences are scheduled, within fifteen (15) days of receiving the written appeal.

Exception: If the Executive Director issues the decision under Step Two, the employee must skip Step Three and proceed directly to Step Four, submitting the appeal to the VASC Board of Directors.

Step Four: Final Appeal to the VASC Board

If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the Executive Director's written decision under Step Three, the aggrieved employee may submit a final written appeal to the VASC Board within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the Executive Director's written decision. This may be accomplished by submitting the written appeal to the VASC Board Chair.¹ The written appeal must include the following:

- A copy of the original Grievance Form;
- A copy of all prior written decision(s); and
- A written explanation of why the aggrieved employee remains unsatisfied with the outcome(s).

¹ If the grievance was filed against the Executive Director, and the Board appointed someone to investigate and decide the grievance, the employee may submit a written appeal to the Board, as outlined in this section, within ten (10) days of receiving the written decision.

An appeal that does not contain such information will be considered incomplete and returned to the aggrieved employee to complete within the required timeline. Submission of an incomplete appeal does not extend the required timeline for submission of a complete appeal. Only the issues presented in the original Grievance Form and timely appeal shall be considered.

Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of a complete written appeal, the VASC Board will schedule a hearing date for the appeal and provide the aggrieved employee with notice of the hearing date and the procedures for the hearing. All hearings conducted pursuant to this Grievance Policy are considered non-adversarial in nature. The VASC Board will make a decision in open session at the hearing, but no names will be used. After the hearing, the VASC Board will issue written confirmation of the decision within ten (10) business days. This decision is final and binding.

The VASC Board is entitled to extend these timelines if necessary to establish a quorum for the hearing.

Legal Reference(s):

S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended:

Section 59-40-60(F)(13) – Charter School Grievance Procedure

Approved by the board on August 26, 2025.
Signed by: *Dr. MacNeill Sprauve*
Board Secretary 76F2F40E11534E5...