



Administrative Regulation:

#215.1

Public Complaints: Checklist for Major Personnel Complaints

- ___ Is complaint being made to the correct person (nearest to the problem ... see list in Policy #215)?
- ___ The complaint should be reduced to writing, preferably by the complainant. (If complainant refuses, administrator can take notes; have the complainant verify that this is the full extent of the complaint; give a xerox copy). Be sure that the complainant realizes that their name and allegations may become known ... see note #2.
- ___ Separate fact from conjecture and decide what facts must be verified.
- ___ Determine the nature and scope of the investigation which should be conducted.
- ___ Give the complainant an outline of the process, and an estimate of the time an investigation will take. Ask complainant which teachers/staff/students may know/help get information.
- ___ Determine who should be informed of the complaint and when they should be informed (police? other principals? superintendent? school committee?).
- ___ Provide the employee with an opportunity to respond to the complaint. Consider the timing of this in relation to the investigation. An employee, by law, must be informed when an investigation begins.
- ___ **Could child safety be at risk? Determine immediately if the employee needs to be placed on administrative leave with pay pending the outcome of the investigation ... that is, if the allegations proved to be true, what would be the nature of the discipline?** ... see note #3. Determine what, if anything, in the employee's statement needs to be investigated.
- ___ Keep complainant informed during the process.
- ___ Summarize findings and conclusions so as to bring closure to the investigation. Who needs to know about the conclusions?

_____ Include recommendations relative to personnel action, if appropriate.

_____ Inform the complainant when the matter is concluded. Be sensitive to the legal right to privacy of students, of employees, and of families.

Notes:

1. Checklist and sequence will vary depending upon the complaint and age level of students ... thus the steps are not numbered.
2. Sometimes a complainant will request that a complaint "be confidential". This may work if the investigator is able to witness the event being repeated. If not, an employee (or student) has a legal right to know their accuser and the specific allegations ... or the investigation may legally have to be ended unless a law has been broken.
3. The chances of the complainant believing that the school will investigate thoroughly are increased if the complainant is aware of the process required by law, if the process moves quickly and (sometimes) if the employee (or student) is temporarily removed from the situation.

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