

Protect Students First Act Complaint Resolution Policy

In accordance with the requirements found in Georgia House Bill 1084, the Protect Students First Act (the “Act”), International Community School (“ICS” or “the School”) maintains the following Complaint Resolution Policy to set forth how eligible individuals may make complaints about ICS’s adherence to the requirements of the Act.

SECTION 1. Summary of the Protect Students First Act

The Protect Students First Act, the full text of which is available at <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/61477>, requires ICS to prohibit its employees from discriminating against students and other employees based on race. Further, ICS must ensure that its curricula and training programs encourage employees and students to practice tolerance and mutual respect and to refrain from judging others based on race. In doing so, it shall not advocate for “divisive concepts,” a term further defined in the Act.

The Act is not intended to and shall not be construed or applied in practice to, among other things, inhibit or violate state and federal Constitutional rights, prohibit ICS from promoting tolerance, mutual respect, or cultural sensitivity or competence, or to ban the discussion of “divisive concepts” as part of a larger course of instruction in a professionally and academically appropriate manner without espousing personal political beliefs.

Further, the Act does not prohibit the use of curricula that addresses the topics of slavery, racial oppression, racial segregation, or racial discrimination, including topics relating to the enactment and enforcement of laws resulting in racial oppression, segregation, and discrimination in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs.

SECTION 2. Individuals Who May Make Complaints Under This Policy

Only the following individuals shall be permitted to make a complaint under this Policy: the parent/guardian of a current ICS student; an ICS student who has reached the age of majority or is a lawfully emancipated minor; and any current ICS administrator, teacher, or other School personnel. An individual making a complaint under this Policy shall be referred to herein as a “Complainant”.

SECTION 3. Request for Records

Any individual able to bring a complaint under this policy may also, before or in conjunction with bringing a complaint, make a written request to the Principal for access to nonconfidential records reasonably believed to substantiate a complaint made under the Act. The Principal shall produce such records for inspection within a reasonable amount of time not to exceed three school days from the date of the written request. In any instance where some or all of the requested documents are unavailable within three school days of receipt of the request, but such documents do exist, the Principal shall within three days provide the Complainant with a description of such records and a timeline for when they will be available shall provide the documents or access thereto as soon as practicable but in no case later than thirty days after receipt of the written request.

If the Principal denies a request for records or does not provide existing responsive records within thirty days, the requester may appeal such denial or failure to respond to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors must place such appeal on the agenda for its next public meeting. If it is too late for such appeal to appear on the next meeting's agenda, the appeal must be included on the agenda for the subsequent meeting.

SECTION 4. Complaint Procedures

To initiate a complaint under this Policy, a Complainant shall submit to the Principal, in writing, a reasonably detailed description of the alleged violation of the Protect Students First Act.

By way of example, a reasonably detailed description would generally include the date on which the alleged violation occurred, in which course or during what school-sponsored event the alleged violation occurred, the individual(s) accused of committing the alleged violation, any witnesses to the alleged violation, and details of the substance of the alleged violation (i.e., what remarks were made or what materials were presented that are objectionable).

SECTION 5. Investigation of Complaints

Within five school days of receiving a written complaint, the Principal or his/her designee shall review the complaint and take reasonable steps to investigate its allegations. What is considered "reasonable" will vary based on the details of the Complaint, but generally will involve interviewing the Complainant, interviewing the individual(s) identified as having violated the Act, interviewing any witnesses to the alleged violation as needed, and/or reviewing the allegedly objectionable materials at issue, if any.

The Principal or his/her designee shall thereafter meet with the Complainant within ten days of receiving the written complaint—unless another schedule is mutually agreed to by the Complainant and the Principal—and inform the Complainant whether a violation occurred, in whole or in part, and, if such a violation was found to have occurred, what

remedial steps have been or will be taken; provided, however, that the confidentiality of student or personnel information shall not be violated.

If the Complainant so requests, the Principal or his/her designee shall within three days of the above referenced meeting, provide to the Complainant a written summary of findings of the investigation and a statement of remedial measures, if any; provided, however, that such written response shall not disclose any confidential student or personnel information.

SECTION 6. Appeal of Principal's Decision

If Complainant disagrees with the Principal's or his/her designee's determination, Complainant may, within 5 business days of receipt of the written findings, submit a request in writing to the Chair of the Board of Directors to review the Principal's or his/her designee's decision. The Board of Directors or its designee shall, within ten school days of receiving a written request or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable, review the Principal's or his/her designee's determinations. Confidential student or personnel matters shall not be subject to review.

Complainant may skip this step if he/she so chooses, and appeal the Principal's decision directly to the Superintendent.

SECTION 7. Appeal to Superintendent

If Complainant disagrees with the Board of Directors' decision and/or if Complainant wishes to skip the appeal to the Board of Directors, Complainant may submit a request in writing to the local school district Superintendent. Confidential student or personnel matters shall not be subject to review. The Superintendent shall review such appeal within ten (10) school days of receiving a written request.

SECTION 8. Appeal to Local Board of Education

If Complainant disagrees with the Superintendent's decision, Complainant may appeal such decision to the Local Board of Education as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1160. Confidential student or personnel matters shall not be subject to review.

SECTION 9. Appeal to State Board of Education

Following a decision by a Local Board of Education, any party listed in the original complaint (Complainant or an employee who allegedly committed the violation) who is aggrieved by the decision of the Local Board of Education shall have the right to appeal such decision to the Georgia State Board of Education for a hearing as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1160. Confidential student or personnel matters shall not be subject to review.