



Cape Fear Center for Inquiry Policy and Procedure Manual

Series 200 General School Administration

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210 Mission Statement

Cape Fear Center for Inquiry is committed to promoting students' abilities to think and create in personally meaningful ways through an integrated, inquiry-based curriculum in a nurturing and empowering environment.

220 Vision Statement

CFCI will foster academic and social inquiry based learning by enriching the state curriculum. We will facilitate research, communication and action through:

- * community partnerships
- * environmental education
- * global connection
- * technology
- * wellness

225 Purpose

When the North Carolina General Assembly ratified Bill 955 to approve charter schools in our state, the purpose was to provide teachers, pupils, parents, and community member's opportunities to become involved in improving education. The purposes for charter schools are to improve learning for all students, encourage different and innovative teaching methods, expand choices for students and parents, and create professional opportunities for teachers.

Our school takes this charge from the state very seriously. Therefore, our teaching methods may not resemble traditional approaches. CFCI teachers work to implement new methods such as inquiry based instruction, alternative assessment techniques, and providing students choices, as well as other innovative initiatives. We ask that parents support us in making our school of choice different and innovative.

Inquiry-based learning is a meaningful process. In this process:

STUDENTS are actively exploring interests and taking ownership of their learning through:

- Asking questions
- Working together
- Thinking and problem solving
- Reflecting and sharing new understandings

While TEACHERS are creating a safe environment by:

- Accepting mistakes
- Respecting students' ideas
- Sharing leadership with students

And are guiding student learning by:

- Knowing students well enough to address individual needs and interests
- Helping students make new connections
- Nurturing a sense of wonder
- Encouraging students to create their own understanding

230 Who We Are/Non-Negotiables

- ~We foster inquiry-based teaching and learning, creativity, and personal growth for all members of the school community.
- ~Children are the heart of the school and all decisions take into consideration their individual physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs.
- ~Learning is a continuous process, enhanced by experience. We will always be “becoming.”
- ~Because we have a unique opportunity to be professional decision-makers, our professional responsibility and accountability are paramount.
- ~Learning is joyous.
- ~All members of our learning community are encouraged and expected to continue learning.
- ~We work to create a community in which we foster open communication in order to grow professionally and to resolve conflict.
- ~We actively seek to show that our students are learning and we are able to explain our teaching and the inquiry process. We are accountable to our students and their parents, each other as faculty members, the Board of Directors, the larger professional community, the State of North Carolina (DPI) and the local community at-large.
- ~We are a unified group of diverse thinkers.
- ~We are expected to be involved in decisions that affect our school and our classrooms.
- ~We are creative as problem solvers and teachers.
- ~We promote the care and respect of others.

235 Communication Agreement

The faculty at CFCI believes that clear and open communication is paramount in maintaining focus on our mission and vision. Therefore, the following guidelines of communication are expected.

Take responsibility for your own feelings. Do not expect others to read your mind. Use “I statements” and refrain from blaming.

Communicate directly with the person or persons involved in an issue. Do not work through go-betweens or serve as a go-between for others. If someone asks you for information about an issue in which you are not directly involved, direct him or her to the proper source.

Do not speak critically about others behind their backs unless you voice the same criticisms to their faces. To avoid unhelpful speculation, give specific names when you make a critical comment in a meeting.

State your position or concern before asking how others feel about it. Do not set someone up to give a “wrong” answer. Be courageous and put yourself on the spot first.

Practice active listening. Listen silently with your whole self until the speaker has finished speaking. Then restate what the speaker has said and wait for confirmation.

Provide continual feedback. Do not allow resentments to build up, and do not forget to give positive strokes.

Respect and validate others’ feelings. If you do not agree or do not support another’s statement, acknowledge what has been said, then make your point.

Use humor softly, not sharply.

Written by Carolyn Shaffer and Kristin Anundsen

240 Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality as it appears in the school setting has the following guidelines:

- * Any information or data or data collected by school staff and/or contained in school records is confidential.
- * Such information may not be discussed or shared with anyone outside the school setting without the written consent of the parent or guardian except under very specific conditions. The conditions include suspected child abuse or neglect; a specific threat made by a student to harm self or others; court order or subpoena; request for records from a school in which the student has enrolled or intends to enroll; and audit review by local, state or federal auditors. (Note: If, as a diagnostician substitute, you are uncertain of the guidelines in a specific situation, please talk with a school psychologist or an Exceptional Children staff member.)
- * Such information may not be discussed or shared with anyone inside the school setting unless he or she has a direct and legitimate relationship in providing school services to the student.
- * Information may not be shared, even without the use of the student's name, because it is possible that the information could still be linked to the student.

See Forms Section for CFCI Assurance of Maintenance of Confidentiality Form

245 Non-Discrimination Policy

Cape Fear Center For Inquiry shall not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender, race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, *sexual orientation*, ancestry, disability or measures of intellectual ability or achievement or aptitude or athletic ability in its admissions or education programs. Tuition or admission fees shall not be charged to any student. This requirement is found on all compliance forms. This policy is in accordance with Federal Law (Amendment 1, Bill of Rights):

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

All public schools funded by the state are required to uphold these statutes. These statutes will be found in the CFCI parent/student handbook.

250 Grievance Committee

As in most organizations, the Board acknowledges conflicts can arise between members of the community. It is the policy of the CFCI's Board of Directors and its Grievance Committee (GC) that the large majority of these conflicts be resolved between the community members themselves in a civil manner and consistent with the social curriculum. The first step in resolving conflicts should be a face to face meeting with the involved parties. If the situation isn't resolved between the parties, one or more of the parties may meet with the director.

In the event that conflicts cannot be resolved despite efforts of the parties, these conflicts can be brought to the Board for resolution. When doing so, the parties agree to abide by the following procedure and furthermore understand that the decisions of the GC are to be considered the "last court of appeal". The GC is not a standing committee of the Board. The Board will appoint GC members on an as needed basis. It is in the best interest of the Board that this committee be comprised of Community Board members only. These committee members will recuse themselves in a case of conflict of interest.

The grievance procedure is as follows:

1. If the situation cannot be resolved at the director level, the parties involved can submit a written request for the formation of a GC to the President of the Board of Directors. The request should include a summary of the dispute, community members involved and a brief review of the actions taken to resolve the dispute, including dates, participants, outcomes, etc.
2. The President of the Board of Directors will then appoint a GC.
3. The GC will decide, after reviewing the aforementioned complaint, to a) request additional information or clarification and/or b) forward the complaint to the other parties with a request for their written response and statement of position, or c) dismiss the matter and decline further action. This step will occur within 30 workdays of receipt of request.
4. After reviewing any relevant position statements, the GC shall decide to
 - a) issue a final ruling to all parties, or
 - b) arrange a meeting of all parties for further discussion before issuing a final ruling (the GC may invite others with relevant experience or expertise to the meeting as needed) or
 - c) take other actions as appropriate.

The final decision will be communicated in writing to the parties. This entire process will be done in a timely manner.

Replaced old 250 Resolution Policy 1-17-2012

255 Prohibition Of Discrimination, Harassment And Bullying

The CFCI Board of Directors acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The board will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying in any of its educational or employment activities.

A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS AND CONSEQUENCES

1. Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

Students, school system employees, parents/guardians, volunteers and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. The board expressly prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Students are expected to comply with the behavior standards established by board policy and the student code of conduct. Employees are expected to comply with board policy and school regulations. Parents/ guardians, volunteers and visitors on school property also are expected to comply with board policy and established school rules and procedures.

Any violation of this policy is serious, and school officials shall promptly take appropriate action. Students will be disciplined in accordance with the school's student behavior management plan (see policy 410 and 420). Based on the nature and severity of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the incident, the student will be subject to appropriate consequences and remedial actions ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to, and including, expulsion.

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including, dismissal. . Parents/ guardians, volunteers and visitors who violate this policy will be directed to leave school property and/or reported to law enforcement, as appropriate. Repeated incidences may lead to further consequences, including but not limited to, restriction of communication and access.

When considering if a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, school administrators should consider the nature and severity of the misconduct to determine whether a classroom or school-wide response is necessary. Such classroom or school-wide responses may include staff training, harassment and bullying prevention programs and other measures deemed appropriate by the director to address the behavior.

2. Retaliation

The board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person for reporting or intending to report violations of this policy, supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy or participating in the investigation of reported violations of this policy.

After consideration of the nature and circumstances of the reprisal or retaliation and in accordance with applicable federal, state or local laws, policies and regulations, the director shall determine the consequences and remedial action for a person found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation.

B. APPLICATION OF POLICY

This policy prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying by students, employees, parents/ guardians volunteers, and visitors. “Visitors” includes persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school. This policy applies to behavior that takes place:

1. in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours;
2. on any vehicle as part of any school activity;
3. during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity;
4. at any time or place when the individual is subject to the authority of school personnel;
5. through any electronic communication;
6. at any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools.

C. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1. Discrimination

Discrimination means any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category, such as race, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, ideology, physical characteristics or disability. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.

2. Harassment and Bullying

a. Harassment or bullying behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that:

- (1) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- (2) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits.

“Hostile environment” means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as harassment or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is harassment or bullying. A hostile environment may be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior or a single incident, if sufficiently severe.

Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, behavior described above that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic or motivated by an individual’s association with a person who has or is perceived to have a differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability. Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to, verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, exclusion from peer

groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment or bullying. It is possible for harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, to occur in various situations. For example, harassment may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including visitors, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of the opposite sex or the same sex.

b. Sexual harassment is one type of harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

(1) submission to the conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic progress or completion of a school-related activity;

(2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual, or in the case of a student, submission to or rejection of such conduct is used in evaluating the student's performance within a course of study or other school-related activity; or

(3) such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work or performance or a student's educational performance, limiting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or environment, or creating an abusive, intimidating, hostile or offensive work or educational environment.

Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature, suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats, pressure for sexual activity, continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual, or the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures or written materials. Acts of verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, intimidation or hostility based on sex, but not involving sexual activity or language, may be combined with incidents of sexually harassing conduct to determine if the incidents of sexually harassing conduct are sufficiently serious to create a sexually hostile environment.

c. Gender-based harassment is also a type of harassment. Gender-based harassment may include acts of verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, intimidation or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping but not involving conduct of a sexual nature.

D. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT OR BULLYING

Employees are required to report any actual or suspected violations of this policy. Students, parents, volunteers, visitors or others are also strongly encouraged to report any actual or suspected incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying.

All reports should be made in accordance with policy 257 Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Complaint Procedure, and reported to one of the school officials identified in that policy. Reports may be made anonymously, and all reports shall be investigated in accordance with that policy.

E. TRAINING AND PROGRAMS

The board directs the Director to establish training and other programs that are designed to help eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all members of the school community. Information about this policy and the related complaint procedure must be included in the training plan.

As funds are available, the board will provide additional training for students, employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students regarding the board's efforts to address discrimination, harassment and bullying and will create programs to address these issues. The training or programs should (1) provide examples of behavior that constitutes discrimination, harassment or bullying; (2) teach employees to identify groups that may be the target of discrimination, harassment or bullying; and (3) train school employees to be alert to locations where such behavior may occur, including locations within school buildings, on field trips, and on cell phones and the Internet.

F. NOTICE

The Director is responsible for providing effective notice to students, parents and employees of the procedures for reporting and investigating complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying. This policy must be posted on the school website, and copies of the policy must be readily available in the director's office. Notice of this policy must appear in all student and employee handbooks and in any school system publication that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for students and employees.

G. REFERENCE

This policy is in response to NC General Statute 115C-407.16 and is model after a sample policy provided by NC School Boards Association.

257 Discrimination, Harassment And Bullying Complaint Procedure

The board takes seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying. The process provided in this policy is designed for those individuals who believe that they may have been discriminated against, bullied or harassed in violation of policy 255, Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying. Individuals who have witnessed or have reliable information that another person has been subject to unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying also should report such violations to one of the school officials listed in subsection C.1. of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously.

A. DEFINITIONS

1. Alleged Perpetrator

The alleged perpetrator is the individual alleged to have discriminated against, harassed or bullied the complainant.

2. Complaint

A complaint is an oral or written notification made by a person who believes he or she is the victim of unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying.

3. Complainant

The complainant is the individual complaining of being discriminated against, harassed or bullied.

4. Days

Days are the working days, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, vacation days or holidays, as set forth in the school calendar. In counting days, the first day will be the first full working day following receipt of the complaint. When a complaint is submitted on or after May 1, time limits will consist of all weekdays (Monday–Friday) so that the matter may be resolved before the close of the school term or as soon thereafter as possible.

5. Investigative Report

The investigative report is a written account of the findings of the investigation conducted in response to a complaint.

6. Investigator

The investigator is the school official responsible for investigating and responding to the complaint.

7. Report

A report is an oral or written notification that an individual, other than the reporter, is a suspected perpetrator or victim of unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying.

B. REPORTING BY EMPLOYEES OR OTHER THIRD PARTIES

1. Mandatory Reporting by School Employees

Any employee who witnessed or who has reliable information or reason to believe that an individual may have been discriminated against, harassed or bullied in violation of policy 255 must report the offense immediately to an appropriate individual designated in subsection C.1., below. An employee who does not promptly report possible discrimination, harassment or bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

2. Reporting by Other Third Parties

All members of the school community including students, parents, volunteers and visitors are also strongly encouraged to report any act that may constitute an incident of discrimination, harassment or bullying.

3. Anonymous Reporting

Reports of discrimination, harassment or bullying may be made anonymously but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

4. Investigation of Reports

Reports of discrimination, harassment or bullying shall be investigated sufficiently to determine whether further action under this policy or otherwise is necessary, and school officials shall take such action as appropriate under the circumstances. At the option of the alleged victim, the report may be treated as a complaint by the alleged victim under this policy.

C. COMPLAINTS BROUGHT BY ALLEGED VICTIMS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT OR BULLYING

1. Filing a Complaint

Any individual, who believes that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed or bullied is strongly encouraged to file a complaint orally or in writing to any of the following

- a. the Director
- b. an immediate supervisor if the individual making the complaint is an employee;
- c. the Human Resources Coordinator if the alleged perpetrator or alleged victim is an employee of the school
- d. any member of the Administrative Team

2. Time Period for Filing a Complaint

A complaint should be filed as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after the 30-day period may be investigated; however, individuals should recognize that delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to such complaints.

3. Informal Resolution

The board acknowledges that many complaints may be addressed informally through such methods as conferences or mediation, and the board encourages the use of such procedures to the extent possible. If an informal process is used, the Director or other designated personnel must (1) notify the complainant that he or she has the option to request formal procedures at any time and (2) make a copy of this policy and other relevant policies available to the complainant. In those circumstances in which informal procedures fail or are inappropriate or in which the complainant requests formal procedures, the complaints will be investigated promptly, impartially and thoroughly according to the procedures outlined in the remainder of this policy.

D. PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS OF ALLEGED INCIDENTS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT OR BULLYING

1. Initiating the Investigation

a. Whoever receives a complaint of discrimination, harassment or bullying pursuant to subsection C.1. shall immediately notify the appropriate investigator who shall respond to the complaint and investigate. The investigator of a complaint is determined as follows:

i. If the alleged incident occurred under the jurisdiction of the Director, the investigator is the Director or designee, unless the alleged perpetrator is the Director, or a member of the board. If the alleged perpetrator is any other employee, the Director or designee shall conduct the investigation in consultation with the Human Resources Coordinator or designee.

ii. If the alleged perpetrator is the Director, the Human Resources Coordinator shall bring the matter to the Executive Committee of the board who will serve as investigator.

iii. If the alleged perpetrator is a member of the board, the Executive Committee is the investigator. If the alleged perpetrator is a member of the Executive Committee, that person shall be excused from the investigation.

c. The investigator shall explain the process of the investigation to the complainant and inquire as to whether the complainant would like to suggest a course of corrective action.

d. Written documentation of all reports and complaints, as well as the school's response, must be maintained in accordance with standard administrative procedures.

e. Failure to investigate and/or address claims of discrimination, harassment or bullying shall result in disciplinary action.

2. Conducting the Investigation

- a. The investigator is responsible for determining whether the alleged act(s) constitutes a violation of policy 255. In so doing, the investigator shall impartially, promptly and thoroughly investigate the complaint. The investigator shall interview (1) the complainant (2) the alleged perpetrator(s); and (3) any other individuals, including other possible victims, who may have relevant information.
- b. Information may be shared only with individuals who need the information in order to investigate and address the complaint appropriately. Any requests by the complainant for confidentiality shall be evaluated within the context of the legal responsibilities of the school. Any complaints withdrawn to protect confidentiality must be recorded in accordance with standard administrative procedures.
- c. The investigator shall review the factual information gathered through the investigation to determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, harassment or bullying, giving consideration to all factual information, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, the age and maturity of the complainant and alleged perpetrator(s), and any other relevant circumstances.

3. Investigative Report

- a. The investigator shall submit a written investigative report to the Director.
- b. The investigator shall notify the complainant of the results of the investigation within 15 days of receiving the complaint, unless additional time is necessary to conduct an impartial, thorough investigation. The investigator shall specify whether the complaint was substantiated and, if so, shall also specify:
 - i. reasonable, timely, age-appropriate, corrective action intended to end the discrimination, harassment or bullying and prevent it from recurring;
 - ii. as needed, reasonable steps to address the effects of the discrimination, harassment or bullying on the complainant; and
 - iii. as needed, reasonable steps to protect the complainant from retaliation as a result of communicating the complaint.
- c. Information regarding specific disciplinary action imposed on the alleged perpetrator(s) will not be given to the complainant unless the information relates directly to the complainant (e.g., an order requiring the perpetrator not to have contact with the complainant).
- d. If the investigator determines that the complaint was substantiated, the perpetrator(s) shall be subject to discipline or other corrective steps, as described in policy 255. If the corrective steps involve actions outside the scope of the investigator's authority, the Director will be notified so that responsibility for taking the corrective steps may be delegated to the appropriate individual.

e. Each alleged perpetrator will be provided with a written summary of the results of the investigation in regard to whether the complaint was substantiated, whether the alleged perpetrator violated relevant law or board policies by his or her actions, and what, if any, disciplinary actions or consequences will be imposed upon the perpetrator in accordance with board policy. The perpetrator may appeal any disciplinary action or consequence in accordance with board policy and law. However, an appeal by the perpetrator of disciplinary action does not preclude school officials from taking appropriate action to address the discrimination, harassment or bullying.

4. Appeal of Investigative Report

a. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the investigative report, he or she may appeal the decision to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors in accordance with the procedure described in subsection E.4.b below. The appeal must be submitted in writing within five days of receiving the investigative report. The Executive Committee may review the documents, conduct any further investigation necessary or take any other steps it determines to be appropriate in order to respond to the complaint. The Executive Committee shall provide a written response within 30 days after receiving the appeal, unless further investigation is needed.

b. If the Executive Committee was the investigator, the complainant may appeal to the Board of Directors within five days of receiving the Executive Committee's response. The board will review the documents, direct that further investigation be conducted if necessary and take any other steps that the board determines to be appropriate in order to respond to the complaint. Upon request of the complainant, the board will hold a hearing in closed session. The board will provide a written response within 30 days after receiving the appeal, unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time be taken to respond.

E. TIMELINESS OF PROCESS

The number of days indicated at each step of the process should be considered a maximum. Every effort should be made to expedite the process.

If any school official charged with investigating the complaint or reviewing the investigation fails at any step in the process to communicate a decision within the specified time limit, the complainant will be entitled to appeal the complaint to the next step unless the official has notified the complainant of the delay and the reason for the delay, such as the complexity of the investigation, review or report. The school official shall make reasonable efforts to keep the complainant apprised of progress being made during any period of delay. Delays that interfere with the exercise of any legal rights are not permitted. Failure by the complainant at any step in the process to appeal a complaint to the next step within the specified time limit will be considered acceptance of the decision at that step, unless the complainant has notified the investigator of a delay and the reason for the delay and the investigator has consented in writing to the delay.

F. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. No reprisals or retaliation of any kind will be taken by the board or by an employee of the school against the complainant or other individual on account of his or her filing a complaint or report or participating in an investigation of a complaint or report filed and decided pursuant to this policy, unless the person knew or had reason to believe that the complaint or report was false or knowingly provided false information.
2. All meetings and hearings conducted pursuant to this policy will be private.
3. The board and school officials will consider requests to hear complaints from a group, but the board and officials have the discretion to hear and respond to complainants individually.
4. The complainant may be represented by an advocate, such as an attorney, at any meeting with school system officials.
5. Should, in the judgment of the director designee, the investigation or processing of a complaint require that an employee be absent from regular work assignments, such absences shall be excused without loss of pay or benefits. This shall not prevent the director or designee from suspending the alleged perpetrator without pay during the course of the investigation.

G. RECORDS

Records will be maintained as required by standard administrative procedures.

G. REFERENCE

This policy is in response to NC General Statute 115C-407.17 and is modeled after a sample policy provided by NC School Boards Association.

Approved 4-20-2010

260 Faculty Meeting Roles and Responsibilities

Job Description for the Roles Used in Consensus-based Meeting & Decision Making

(It is useful for different members of the group to rotate through the various roles listed below. That way everyone has a chance to learn and grow.)

Curriculum Coordinator

It is the job of the Curriculum coordinator to collect items to be put on the agenda from individual staff members. The CC will then forward the agenda to the Facilitator and the rest of the faculty. Agenda items are due to the CC by Tuesday before noon and the agenda is sent out by the end of the day on Tuesday.

Facilitator

The Facilitator writes up the agenda on large paper before the meeting begins, using an agenda “shell” agreed to by participants. An example of a “shell” follows:

- ❖ Silence
- ❖ Gathering (Morning-meeting-type activity, song or focusing activity)
- ❖ Agenda Review (changes in priorities or other adjustments are made)
- ❖ Announcements
- ❖ Discussion of Main Items
- ❖ Report from Process Observer
- ❖ Closing (can be silence, song, etc.)
- ❖ Acknowledgements

The Facilitator posts the agenda and begins the meeting, leads the gathering, reviews the agenda and attains approval for the agenda or and changes. Changes should be incorporated into the agenda according to the needs of the group and to set approximate times for each . *Warning: Trying to cover too much in one meeting is a major pitfall!* Using a consensus process may require time for introspection, deliberation and discussion. Putting too much on the agenda can make the situation frustrating. It is the Facilitator’s responsibility to make sure that time and format guidelines are respected.

The Facilitator does not take a leadership or partisan position. When an issue is set on the agenda that is near and dear to someone’s heart, that person should not facilitate the meeting. If, during the meeting, a situation arises in which the Facilitator needs to make a comment, (s)he will ask someone else to temporarily take over facilitation duties. Facilitators must carefully monitor themselves in this regard.

The Facilitator may suggest different discussion strategies depending upon the agenda items (such as polling, passing around a clipboard, small group discussion with reports back to the whole group or whole group discussion). The Facilitator should encourage the reticent to speak up and politely discourage interruption by more forthright participants. For example, the Facilitator might monitor the meeting process by “stacking” (making an ongoing list of those who want to speak/comment on an issue and sticking to the list) or going “round robin” (which encourages everyone present to give their opinion).

The Facilitator also has the job of keeping the group focused. If people have an objection or concern about an issue it should be addressed to the whole group rather than expressed in side talk. During a particularly difficult or contentious discussion the Facilitator may want to call for a moment (or period) of silence before resuming discussion.

The Facilitator must be vigilant in noticing when an announcement becomes a “main item” (because it is eliciting discussion). When this occurs, the Facilitator should:

- ❖ Ask the group if the discussion is necessary and, if so
- ❖ Ask if it is important enough to adjust the current agenda or
- ❖ If it can be tabled for the present (to become a “main item” at a future meeting).

The Facilitator must do the same for topics which participants spontaneously insert into the discussion that are not formally on the agenda.

It is up to the Facilitator to monitor, with the help of participants, when a “sense of the meeting” has been reached (when a solution/decision has been found that everyone can and will truly support). The Facilitator will restate what (s)he hears as the consensus position/solution/decision about a particular agenda item before moving on to the next item. If all are in agreement, the Facilitator will see that the Recorder writes it clearly in the meeting notes and then reads it aloud to ensure that wording is correct.

When it becomes clear that an agenda item is going to take more than the allotted time, the Facilitator will ask participants:

- ❖ if the need for a timely decision requires an extension of meeting time;
- ❖ if the item should be tabled until the next meeting (allowing participants to spend the ensuing time pondering the item until the next meeting when it will be re-addressed);
or
- ❖ if a committee should be formed to research the item, to elicit more perspectives or to “wrestle” with the issue more fully and then bring it back to the whole group at a future meeting.

The Facilitator may also:

- ❖ propose or call for suggestions for an “interim” decision that can be temporarily agreed upon (with the full understanding that it will not become the official decision)

until consensus has reached.)

[When changes to existing policy or procedures are “in process,” the status quo will continue as official policy until consensus is reached.]

A good Facilitator will regularly refocus participants during discussions by stating or restating where the group currently “stands” on an issue and then eliciting group response. Last, but not least, the Facilitator must follow through on things and see that the agenda for the next meeting appropriately reflects the priorities set at the last meeting (while taking into account the need to reassess priorities as new issues come up.)

Recorder

The Recorder takes notes a laptop in front of the group during the meeting without prejudice. This is the official record of the meeting. This allows the Recorder to paraphrase while also allowing the speaker to correct the Recorder if (s)he has inadvertently misconstrued the speaker’s intent. This is the official record of meetings. The Recorder must communicate with the Facilitator, making sure that the discussion points, suggestions and decisions made as a group are clearly noted. It is useful to use some system to distinguish discussion from actual consensus-based decisions (for example, using different colors or otherwise making decisions stand out from the general text). The Recorder is responsible for saving the recorded notes of the meeting minutes in an agreed-upon place (where staff can easily access/ review them. The Recorder is also responsible for writing/typing up the announcements and decisions made at the meeting (it shouldn’t be more than one page) and getting a copy to everyone on staff within a couple of days.

Process Observer

The Process Observer monitors the quality of the meeting process and alerts the participants to problems. If, during the meeting, someone’s needs are not being met, it is the Process Observer’s job to help that person be heard. At the end of the meeting, the Process Observer summarizes his/her observations. (Did the meeting start and end on time? Were procedures followed? Were there too many interruptions or side conversations? Did the meeting achieve its purpose? What can the group learn from the way that participants performed their roles? How well did the group handle disagreements?) This review helps participants learn to use the process more effectively and to work out problems as they arise. If the facilitator would find it helpful, the process observer could assist by stacking names to help the flow of communication.

The Group

During meetings it is essential that everyone assist in making the process work. Each participant can help by remembering that everyone's ideas and concerns are valid and should be approached respectfully and with an open mind. Participants need to fully entertain each person's perspective and validate their experience.

We have agreed as a community to approach our faculty meetings as a Responsive Classroom circle. We should make every effort to come to the circle on time. Cell phones should be silenced and focus should be on the speaker.

It is crucial that each participant truly participate. This requires not only listening respectfully, but also voicing opinions/concerns openly and honestly. This process will work when people have the courage to speak what they think and feel. This may require engaging in respectful conflict until a solution emerges that everyone will support. If you do not agree with a decision you must either help to figure out a way your objections can be incorporated into the decision or be willing to stand aside from the decision, while agreeing to abide by it. **It is vitally important that all participants fully support and abide by any final decisions. This means no negative "after talk" or grumbling. If you still have a major problem with a decision, you should have voiced it at the meeting(s).** Occasionally, after trying a decision, people find problems or exceptions that were unforeseen when the decision was made. In these cases, by putting it back on the agenda the decision can be revisited. This should happen only rarely. It should not become a regular part of the process.

When you put in the time to learn how to use this process, it reaps very positive results. It empowers everyone in the group, helping all to grow. By respectfully sharing their collective experience, knowledge and feelings, participants reach decisions that are truly wise. They come to feel that they are more than mere colleagues; they become a community in the truest sense of the word.

270 Faculty Committees

There is an expectation that faculty have a part in the decision making process at CFCI. All veteran faculty (two years or more at CFCI) need to be a participating member of a school committee (board and/or faculty). Non-veteran faculty can volunteer but it is not mandated. Faculty Committees at the beginning of every year will need to put into writing their charged mission. This mission needs approval by the Director and must be in-line with the mission and vision of CFCI. Each committee will need a chair person to report to the staff monthly at staff meetings.

The following is a list of potential yearly committees. This list is not inclusive or exclusive:

Life Long Learning (L3)

Social

Technology

Responsive Classroom

Safety

Building/Playground Beautification

Committees from year to year might change based on the need of the academic year of the CFCI learning community.

280 Crisis Management Plan

CFCI will have a detailed Crisis Management Plan that includes guidelines, definitions, expectations, protocols and other necessary information to insure the safety and security of the students, parents and staff. The detailed written Crisis Management Plan will be kept in the Staff Handbook and will be updated regularly. The Crisis Management Plan will include the following areas:

- Communication Links and Protocols
- Severe Weather Situations
- 911 Calls
- Allergic and Medication Reactions
- Bomb Threats
- Death of A Student or Staff Member
- Gangs
- Hazardous Material Spill
- Airborne Hazard
- Hostage Situation
- Lockdown Procedures
- Injury and Medical Emergency
- Out of Control Student
- Suicide Threat
- Weapon on Campus
- Violent Behavior
- Intruder
- Evacuation Procedures

Other areas can be added as needed.

285 CFCI Partnership's Involvement in Education and School Relations

The CFCI Board of Directors believes that parents and teachers are vital partners in the successful education of children. The Board recognizes that a student's education is a responsibility shared by the school, the students and the family. Research indicates that involvement of parents in support of the children's education increases student achievement. The Board also recognizes the various roles the CFCI Partnership plays in the school. The CFCI Board of Directors offers its full cooperation and encourages collaboration among the Partnership and CFCI.

General Guidelines:

1. The CFCI Partnership is a separate legal entity from Cape Fear Center for Inquiry established to support the mission and vision of the school.
2. The CFCI Partnership must provide details of the structure of the organization including its officers' names and its bylaws annually.
3. The funds of the Partnership shall be separate from school accounts and subject to sound accounting and finance procedures according to their bylaws.
4. The Partnership must adhere (where applicable) to all Cape Fear Center for Inquiry's policies and procedures.
5. The CFCI Partnership may use the name and or logo of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry.
6. The CFCI Partnership shall not provide additional salary to personnel currently employed by Cape Fear Center for Inquiry.
7. The CFCI Partnership will be given the priority to use the school facilities unless a school sponsored function has to be scheduled during the desired time. All facility use by the CFCI Partnership will comply with all policies and regulations established by the CFCI Board of Directors. No rental fee will apply.
8. Any recognition to a group or individuals by the CFCI Partnership must be made known that the recognition is for and from the Partnership.
9. A member of the CFCI Partnership Executive Committee will sit on the CFCI Board of Directors as a nonvoting member.
10. The role of the Partnership is to supplement, not supplant, CFCI school programs. As needs arise, the Director may choose to approach the Partnership for its assistance. The Partnership Board will review any request and make a decision about feasibility and the level of involvement by the group.

Fundraising Guidelines:

1. A member of the CFCI Partnership Executive Committee will sit on the CFCI Board of Directors' Development Committee.
2. The Partnership will coordinate their fundraising activities/events and reach mutual consensus (in accordance with the CFCI Mission) with the Director.
3. Door-to-Door solicitation by students of CFCI is strongly prohibited.
4. Fundraising activities shall not be conducted within the instructional day on school grounds unless there is written approval by the Director.
5. Fundraising activities conducted off school grounds shall not be the responsibility of Cape Fear Center for Inquiry.
6. Fundraising activities shall not restrict any student from participating in any educational or social experience.
7. Sale incentive rewards will be discouraged and activities will be conducted in accordance with fundamental CFCI principles such as noncompetition, non-door-to-door, etc.
8. All funds raised by the CFCI Partnership must be used to achieve the stated mission of the Partnership.

Contribution Guidelines:

1. School buildings or grounds may not be renovated or changed without the prior written approval of the Director. Any plan or project that would increase personnel and or maintenance costs for facilities must have prior written approval by the Director.
2. Procedures:
 - a. Protocol for asking for resources of any kind from the Partnership will set up by the Partnership and be in written form.
 - b. School supply requests of over \$250.00 will be submitted to the Director prior to Partnership consideration.
 - c. All equipment/furniture/fixtures purchased over \$150.00 will be submitted to the Director prior to the Partnership consideration.
 - d. All items purchased by the Partnership will be included on the school's inventory
3. All items purchased become property of CFCI and can be reallocated by the Director in cooperation with the teacher(s) as appropriate on an as needed basis.

The Partnership does not have the authority to provide conflict resolution to any or all concerns dealing with the operations of CFCI. (Please refer to the CFCI Communication Agreement Policy #240) The Cape Fear Center for Inquiry Board of Directors reserves the right after due process to revoke the approval of the Partnership and its association with Cape Fear Center for Inquiry if it is found that the CFCI Partnership operations and functions are not consistent with the mission of the Cape Fear Center for Inquiry.

Approved 2-16-2010

290 Application, Lottery and Enrollment

Application

During the month of January, CFCI will conduct Parent Education meetings which give parents the opportunity to tour the school, meet the faculty, and learn about our school. Applications for the upcoming school year are distributed at the close of each meeting.

Lottery numbers are assigned to each application, starting with “1” (siblings receive the same number). The deadline for application submission is the last school day in January. If mailed, the application must be postmarked no later than January 31. All applications, once received, are reviewed by the front office staff for necessary info. The applications are placed alphabetically, by grade, into 3 ring binders and held in the front office. Our lottery is generally held the third week of February, allowing teachers to have time to assess home-schooled applicants to determine proper grade placement for the lottery.

Lottery

If there are more applicants than space available in any grade level(s), then there will be a random drawing of lottery numbers to establish enrollment and waiting lists. Maximum class size limits are 18 students in each K and 1st grade class, 20 in each 2nd and 3rd grade class, and 22 in each 4th – 8th grade class. A waiting list will be established using the lottery system whenever capacity is exceeded and the students on the list will be contacted if and when openings occur in the current school year only. The waiting list does not roll over to the following school year. A new application must be completed and turned in to the main school office each school year to be included in the lottery.

After the lottery, applications are rearranged by status in the binders. After the lottery process is complete, parents of all applicants will be contacted via e-mail or phone and notified if their child (ren) is eligible for admission and enrollment, or what number they are on the wait list(s).

The following priorities to the lottery and admissions process are established in accordance with the 1997 amendments to G.S. 115C-238.29 and House Bill 250 (2013).

PRIORITY #1, Currently enrolled students.

PRIORITY #2, Children of fulltime CFCI faculty/staff members. Fulltime faculty/staff that are hired after the lottery may have their children added to the top of the waiting list or administratively enrolled, up to the 20th day of school.

PRIORITY #3, Siblings of currently enrolled students. Siblings are defined as brother or sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepbrother, stepsister or foster child who resides in the same household as the currently enrolled student.

PRIORITY #4, Siblings of students who have completed the highest grade level offered by CFCI and who were enrolled in at least four grade levels offered by CFCI.

PRIORITY #5, Students who were enrolled in CFCI within the two previous school years but left the school to participate in an academic study abroad program or a competitive admission residential program or because of the vocational opportunities of the student's parent.

Enrollment

Once a student has been admitted to the Cape Fear Center for Inquiry, formal enrollment is required to reserve the student's space in the school. Enrollment will take place during the month of March. The enrollment procedure will ensure that the school has information necessary to acquire student records which are needed to meet State Board of Education records requirements for charter schools. This information includes birth certificate, immunization record, and transfer records from previous schools (public, private or home schools) including test scores, IEP/504 records and behavioral records. These records are not needed during the enrollment period, but we must receive the enrollment form to reserve the space. All kindergarten enrollment forms must have a copy of the birth certificate attached.

A student who has been admitted but who is not enrolled by March 31st will be removed from the list. Waiting lists will be maintained from the time of the lottery through the 20th day of school of the upcoming year. If and when an opening in any grade should occur, the next child on the wait list will be called. After March 31st, parents have 48 hours in which to enroll from the time the offer is extended. If enrollment does not take place within this time frame, the application will be withdrawn. No new students will be admitted after the 20th day of school.

Attendance and Removal from Enrollment

It is important that students who have been enrolled be present the first day of school. If a student is not present the first day, school personnel will make every effort to contact the parent(s) through phone call, email or home visit. If there is no contact with the parent within 72 hours of the start of school, the student will be withdrawn from enrollment.