



Appendix G: Complaint Policy

Any individual or group may bring a complaint to the School's attention. This policy describes both the formal and informal complaint processes, corresponding to different types of alleged violations. Although any individual or group may bring a formal complaint, BELA has established an informal complaint process to expeditiously resolve matters in question. Complaints that do not involve an alleged violation of BELA's charter or charter law should be addressed through the informal process described below.

Informal Complaint Process

Informal complaints are those such as problems with assigned teachers or classes, or issues with grades, promotion, or retention. BELA's Board of Trustees encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate teachers, leaders, or other staff. Below is the procedural order of how BELA requests that stakeholders file informal complaints.

Often, issues or complaints can be resolved informally and do not need to involve the formal complaint process described below. Where appropriate, a stakeholder may wish to use the informal approach, which may result in a more timely resolution of the issue and which is also suited to dealing with issues that do not involve a violation of the charter or law. Even issues involving a violation of the charter or law may be resolved informally, and a stakeholder may wish to use this avenue before making a formal complaint. Using the informal process does not prevent a stakeholder from using the formal complaint process later.

To make an informal complaint, provide your concerns, in writing, to the appropriate staff member described in the following steps. Addressing your complaint as soon as it arises and at the lowest possible administrative level will allow for early resolution. The complainant must follow the following steps:

Teacher

Most family concerns are about what happens in the classroom either academically or behaviorally. We ask that families first submit their complaint to their child's teacher. Teachers are asked to respond to families within 48 hours.

Dean



If the issue is not resolved with the teacher, or the family has not heard back from a teacher within a reasonable amount of time (48 hrs. for a response), the family may submit the complaint to the appropriate grade-level Dean.

Head of School

If the issue remains unresolved, or the family has not heard back from the Dean within a reasonable amount of time (48 hrs. for a response), the family may submit the complaint to the Head of School. The Head of School, within her discretion, may call a meeting with the family and any other staff member who can be helpful in providing more information or a resolution to the concern.

Board of Trustees

If after working with the Head of School, the issue is still unresolved, or the issue involves the Head of School directly, the family may send their concern in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, either via email at Diane@belahs.org or via mail to: Diane Nathaniel c/o Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter School, 125 Stuyvesant Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11221. The Board of Trustees will then investigate the concern and provide a written response back to the family within 45 days.

Formal Complaint Process

A formal complaint is a complaint that alleges that BELA's charter, the NYS Charter Schools Act, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the school, has been violated. Families making a formal complaint do not have to follow the informal process and can file a complaint directly with the BELA Board of Trustees.

All formal complaints must be submitted via email at Diane@belahs.org or via mail to: Diane Nathaniel c/o Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter School, 125 Stuyvesant Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11221.

The contents of the letter/email should include a detailed written statement of the nature of the complaint including the names of the individuals involved and the time, date, and place the incidents and/ or actions at issue occurred; an allegation referring to the specific term of the charter or provision of law that the School has violated, what response, if any, was received from the School thus far, what relief the complainant is seeking, and the name, address, and phone number of the complainant.

The Board of Trustees will investigate and respond to the complaint within 45 days of receipt of the formal written complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the response from BELA's Board of Trustees, you may submit a formal complaint to BSA's authorizer, the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. Please complete the SUNY complaint



form (available at <https://newyorkcharters.overitdev.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Grievance-Form-3.pdf>) and email it to charters@suny.edu. Alternatively, please mail the form to:

SUNY Charter Schools Institute
353 Broadway
Albany, NY 12246

The Charter Schools Institute, acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York, will investigate and respond.

If, after presentation of the complaint to the Charter Schools Institute, you determine that the Charter Schools Institute has not adequately addressed the complaint, you may present the complaint to the State Education Department, acting on behalf of the Board of Regents, which will investigate and respond. The contact information for the State Education Department is as follows:

Charter Schools Office Room #5N EB Mezzanine
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

The complaint must be clearly marked as a charter school complaint.

The Charter Schools Institute and the State Education Department each have the power and the duty to take remedial action to resolve the complaint, as appropriate.

If you elect to follow the informal complaint procedures to resolve a complaint appropriate for a formal complaint, you shall be permitted at any time to stop the informal complaint procedures and initiate formal complaint procedures.

If an individual or group voices a complaint at a public meeting of BSA's Board of Trustees or to individual trustees, the Board of Trustees shall not respond to the substance of the complaint, but instead shall thank the individual or group for their time and direct them to the relevant complaint procedures.