

Journey School

Civil Rights Complaint Procedures for Child Nutrition Programs

Purpose

Journey School is committed to administering its food and nutrition services in compliance with all federal and state civil rights laws and regulations. This document establishes Journey School's specific procedures for receiving, documenting, and processing complaints alleging discrimination in the operation of any USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) school meal program.

Scope

These procedures apply to all Journey School staff involved in the administration of school meal programs and to any individual who wishes to file a civil rights complaint related to those programs.

Right to File a Complaint

Any person who believes they have been discriminated against in the operation of a USDA FNS school meal program has the right to file a civil rights complaint. Complaints must be filed within **180 days** of the alleged discriminatory action.

Bases of Discrimination

Civil rights complaints may allege discrimination based on one or more of the following protected classes applicable to USDA programs: race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), age, or disability.

How to File a Complaint

A civil rights complaint may be made in writing, verbally, or in person.

- **Written complaints** may be submitted by completing the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form or by writing a letter containing the required information.
- **Verbal or in-person complaints** must be accepted. If a complainant is unwilling or unable to put the complaint in writing, the staff member receiving the complaint is responsible for documenting the complaint as described below.

Filing a complaint through Journey School's regular complaint or grievance process is **not required** and is **not a prerequisite** for acceptance of a civil rights complaint.

Staff Responsibility for Receiving Complaints

The **Executive Director, Gavin Keller**, is the employee responsible for receiving and processing civil rights complaints related to the school meal programs.

Contact Information:

- Name: Gavin Keller
- Title: Executive Director
- Email: gavin@journeyschool.net

If any Journey School staff member receives a civil rights complaint, that staff member must immediately notify the Executive Director and forward all information received.

Required Elements of a Complaint

When a complaint is received verbally or in person, the staff member must make every attempt to obtain and document the following information:

- Name, address, telephone number, and/or email address of the complainant
- Location and name of the agency or site involved (Journey School)
- Nature of the incident or action that led the complainant to feel discrimination occurred
- Basis of the alleged discrimination (race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability)
- Names and contact information of any individuals who may have knowledge of the incident
- Date(s) the alleged discriminatory action occurred

Lack of complete information does **not** prevent a complaint from being accepted or forwarded.

Documentation of Verbal Complaints

When a complaint is made verbally or in person and not submitted in writing by the complainant, the receiving staff member must:

1. Write a detailed summary of the allegations using the required elements listed above.
2. Read back the information to the complainant to ensure accuracy, when possible.
3. Date and sign the written summary.

Forwarding Complaints

Journey School staff **must not attempt to investigate, mediate, or resolve** civil rights complaints.

All civil rights complaints must be promptly forwarded to the appropriate authorities as required:

- **USDA:** Complaints may be submitted directly by the complainant or forwarded by the School Nutrition Program Designee to USDA in accordance with federal guidance.
- **California Department of Education (CDE):** Complaints related to school nutrition programs must also be forwarded to CDE Nutrition Services Division as applicable.

Timeliness

Civil rights complaints must be forwarded as soon as possible and no later than required by state or federal guidance after receipt.

Confidentiality

All complaints and related information will be handled in a confidential manner. Information will be shared only with individuals who have a legitimate need to know for purposes of complaint processing.

Recordkeeping

Journey School will maintain records of civil rights complaints and their disposition in accordance with federal and state record retention requirements for Child Nutrition Programs.

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, [AD-3027](#) (PDF), found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

2. fax:
202-690-7442; or
3. email:
Program.Intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Review and Training

These procedures will be reviewed annually and incorporated into staff training for all personnel involved in the administration of school meal programs.

Journey School

Meal Program COMPLAINT FORM

The purpose of this form is to assist you in filing a complaint with the Journey School. You are not required to use this form; a letter with the same information is sufficient. However, the information requested in the items marked with a star (*) must be provided, whether or not the form is used.

1. State your name and address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No.: Home: () _____ Work: () _____

2. *Person(s) discriminated against, if different from above:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No.: Home: () _____ Work: () _____

3. * Agency and department or program that discriminated:

Name: _____

Any individual if known: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No.: () _____

4. What is the most convenient time and place for us to contact you about this complaint?

If we will not be able to reach you directly, you may wish to give us the name and phone number of a person who can tell us how to reach you and/or provide information about your complaint:

Name: _____

Tel. No.() _____

5. If you have an attorney representing you concerning the matters raised in this complaint, please provide the following:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No.: () _____

6. *To your best recollection, on what date(s) and location(s) did the alleged discrimination take place? Earliest date of discrimination:

Most recent date of discrimination:

Location of discrimination:

7. Complaints of discrimination must generally be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination. If the most recent date of discrimination, listed above, is more than 180 days ago, you may request a waiver of the filing requirement. If you wish to request a waiver, please explain why you waited until now to file your complaint.

8. * Please explain as clearly as possible what happened, why you believe it happened, and how you were discriminated against. Indicate who was involved. Be sure to include how other persons were treated differently from you. (Please use additional sheets if necessary and attach a copy of written materials pertaining to your case.)

USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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