

JOURNEY SCHOOL UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES POLICY

Journey School (“School”) is committed to compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. Many issues are best handled informally and proactively, and the Board encourages the early resolution of complaints with direct communication whenever possible. Additional information about the school’s communication protocols are found on the school website (www.journeyschool.net) and School Handbook (also found on the school website).

This Uniform Complaint Procedures Policy (“UCP”) contains rules and instructions about UCP complaints regarding any alleged violation of federal or state laws or regulations governing certain educational programs and activities offered by the School. The School developed this UCP in accordance with Title 5, California Code of Regulations (CCR), § 4600 *et seq.* The School has primary responsibility to ensure School’s compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. The School will investigate and seek to resolve, in accordance with this UCP policy, complaints alleging failure to comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations including, but not limited to, allegations of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying or noncompliance with laws relating to all programs and activities implemented by the School that are subject to the UCP. This UCP has been approved by the School’s Board.

UCP COMPLAINTS

Not all complaints fall under the scope of the UCP. Complaints arising from the employment relationship are separately addressed by the School’s employment policies. Many concerns, including classroom assignments, grades, hiring and evaluation of staff, homework policies and practices, student advancement and retention, student discipline, student records, the Brown Act, and other general education requirements, are not UCP complaints. The School, however, may use these complaint procedures to address complaints not covered by the UCP in its sole discretion. Only allegations within the subject matters falling within the UCP can be appealed to the California Department of Education (“CDE”).

Complaints Regarding Programs and Activities

According to applicable law, the programs and activities subject to the UCP are:

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| • Accommodations for Pregnant and Parenting Pupils | • Education and Graduation requirements of Pupils in foster care, pupils who are homeless, pupils formerly in juvenile court now enrolled in the School, pupils who are migratory, and pupils participating in a newcomer program |
| • Adult Education Programs | |
| • After School Education and Safety | |
| • Agricultural Career Technical Education | |

- Regional Occupational Centers and Programs
- Reasonable Accommodation to a Lactating Pupil
- Schoolsite Councils
- School Plan for Student Achievement
- Pupil Fees, which includes a purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment or clothes associated with an educational activity
- Complaints Regarding the School's LCAP
- Every Student Succeeds Act
- Migrant Education
- Physical Education Instructional Minutes
- State Preschool Health and Safety Issues in LEAs Exempt from Licensing
- State Preschool
- Career Technical and Technical Education; Career Technical and Technical Training Programs
- Childcare and Development Programs
- Compensatory Education
- Consolidated Categorical Aid Programs
- Course Periods without Educational Content (grades nine through twelve)
- Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, Intimidation and/or Bullying against any protected group as identified in Education Code §§ 200 and 220 and Government Code § 11135, including any actual or perceived characteristics set forth in Penal Code § 422.55, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, in any program or activity conducted by the School which is funded directly by, or that received or benefits from, any state financial assistance. Unlawful discrimination further includes noncompliance with Education Code sections 243(a) and 244(a).
- School or athletic team names, mascots, or nicknames
- Any other state or federal educational program the State Superintendent of Public Instruction or the California Department of Education or designee deems appropriate

THE UCP ANNUAL NOTICE

The School provides written notice of this UCP on an annual basis. The notice addresses all students, employees, parents or guardians, school advisory committee members, appropriate

private school officials or representatives (if applicable), and other interested parties. The notice includes information regarding allegations about discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying. It lists all federal and state programs within the scope of the UCP. It lists the position at School who is responsible for processing UCP complaints and is knowledgeable about the laws and programs that they are assigned to investigate, and the identity(ies) of the person(s) currently occupying the position, if known. The School's annual UCP notice is in English. If 15% or more of students enrolled at the School speak a single primary language other than English, the annual notice will be provided in that language as well pursuant to Education Code § 48985.

DESIGNATION OF RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEE

The School's Executive Director is the employee responsible for receiving, investigating and responding to UCP complaints (the "Responsible Employee"):

Gavin Keller, Executive Director
Journey School
27102 Foxborough
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
949-448-7232
gavin@journeyschool.net

In no instance will the Responsible Employee be assigned to investigate a complaint in which he or she has a bias that would prohibit him or her from fairly investigating or responding to the complaint. Any complaint against Responsible Employee or that raises a concern about Responsible Employee's ability to investigate the complaint fairly and without bias should be referred to another appropriate School official, who will help assist how the complaint will be investigated.

The School will ensure that the Responsible Employee (or designee) investigating the complaint is knowledgeable about the laws and programs at issue in the complaints. The School may consult with legal counsel as appropriate.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-RETALIATION

The School will ensure that complainants are protected from retaliation and that the identity of a complainant alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying remains confidential as appropriate.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Step 1: Filing a UCP Complaint

A UCP complaint must be filed according to the procedures set forth herein.

Any individual, including a person's duly authorized representative or an interested third party, public agency, or organization, may file a UCP complaint. However, a complaint filed on behalf of a student may only be filed by that student or that student's duly authorized representative.

A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying may be filed by a person who alleges that he or she personally suffered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or by a person who believes that any specific class of individuals has been subjected to the same, or by a duly authorized representative who alleges that an individual student has been subjected to the same.

A UCP complaint is written and signed. If a complainant is unable to put his/her complaint in writing due to a disability or illiteracy, the School will assist the complainant in the filing of the complaint. A signature on a UCP complaint may be handwritten, typed (including in an email), or electronically-generated. Complaints related to pupil fees and/or LCAPs may be filed anonymously (that is, without an identifying signature) if the complaint provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance.

Complainants are encouraged, but not required, to use the School's complaint form, attached.

Complaints shall be filed with the Responsible Employee at the address provided herein. A pupil fees complaint may also be filed with the School's Education Director or designee. The Responsible Employee will maintain a log of complaints and subsequent related actions to the extent required by oversight agencies.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Responsible Employee (or designee) will evaluate the complaint to determine whether it is subject to this UCP and will notify the complainant within five (5) workdays if the complaint is outside the jurisdiction of this UCP.

Timing of Complaints and Investigation

A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be filed no later than six (6) months from the date when the alleged unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying occurred or the complainant first obtained knowledge of it. The time for filing may be extended by the Responsible Employee (or designee) for good cause upon written request from the complainant. Such extension shall be in writing and may not exceed ninety (90) days following the expiration of the six-month period.

All other complaints shall be filed no later than one (1) year from the date the alleged violation occurred. For complaints regarding LCAP, the date of the alleged violation is the date when the School's governing board approves the LCAP or annual update.

Unless a UCP complaint is resolved through mediation as set forth below, the School will investigate the UCP complaint and issue a written Investigation Report to the complainant within 60 calendar days from the date of receipt of the complaint, unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of time.

Step 2: Mediation (Optional)

The Responsible Employee may informally discuss with the complainant the possibility of using mediation. If the complainant agrees to mediation, the Responsible Employee shall make arrangements for this process.

Before initiating the mediation of an unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying complaint, the Responsible Employee shall ensure that all parties agree to make the mediator a party to related confidential information.

The Responsible Employee (or designee) will inform the complainant that the mediation process may be terminated at any time and proceed directly to an investigation. If mediation resolves the complaint to the satisfaction of both parties, the School will implement any remedial measures and the complainant may choose to withdraw the complaint. If mediation does not resolve the complaint within the parameters of law, the Responsible Employee (or designee) shall proceed with his/her investigation of the complaint.

The use of mediation does not extend the School's timelines for investigating and resolving the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to such an extension of time.

Step 3: Investigation of Complaint

In order to investigate the complaint, the Responsible Employee (or designee) shall have access to applicable School records and/or information related to the complaint allegations. As part of his/her investigation, the Responsible Employee (or designee) will do all of the following, in any order:

- Provide an opportunity for the complainant and/or complainant's representative(s) to present evidence or information relevant to the complaint or investigative process.
- Obtain statements from individuals/witnesses who can provide relevant information concerning the alleged violation.
- Review documents that may provide information relevant to the allegation.
- When necessary, seek clarification on specific complaint issues.

Refusal by the complainant or his/her representatives to provide the Responsible Employee (or designee) with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, or failure or refusal to cooperate or obstruction of the investigation, may result in dismissal of complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegation.

Refusal by the School to provide the Responsible Employee (or designee) with access to records and/or other information related to the allegations in the complaint, or failure or refusal to cooperate or obstruction of the investigation, may result in a finding, based on evidence collected, that a violation has occurred and may result in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant.

Step 4: Final Written Decision (Investigation Report)

The Responsible Employee (or designee) shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the investigation and final decision (the "Investigation Report") within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the complaint, unless complainant agrees in writing to extend this date.

The School's Investigation Report shall be written in English and, when required by law, in the complainant's primary language.

The Investigation Report shall include:

1. The finding(s) of fact based on the evidence gathered;
2. Conclusion providing a clear determination as to each allegation as to whether the School is in compliance with the relevant law;
3. If the School finds merit in the complaint, the corrective actions required by law;
4. Notice of the complainant's right to appeal the School's Investigation Report to the CDE, except when the School has used its UCP to address a non-UCP complaint; and
5. Procedures to be followed for initiating an appeal to the CDE.

In addition, any Investigation Report on a complaint of discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying based on state law shall include a notice that the complainant must wait until sixty (60) calendar days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies.

An Investigation Report shall not include student information protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or any private employee personnel information, including but not limited to the nature of the disciplinary action taken against a student or employee. If a student or employee is disciplined as a result of the complaint, the Investigation Report shall simply state that effective action was taken and that the student or employee was informed of the School's expectations.

If the School finds merit in a complaint regarding pupil fees, course periods without educational content, physical education instructional minutes, or LCAP, the remedy will go to all affected pupils and parents/guardians. With respect to a pupil fees complaint, the School, in good faith will engage in reasonable efforts to identify and fully reimburse all pupils, parents and guardians who paid any unlawful pupil fee within one year prior to the filing of the complaint. For all other complaints within the scope of the UCP, the remedy shall go to the affected pupil.

APPEAL PROCESS

A complainant may appeal the School's Investigation Report by filing a written appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the Investigation Report to the California Department of Education ("CDE"). This appeal to the CDE must specify and explain the basis for the appeal, including at least one of the following:

1. The School failed to follow its complaint procedures;
2. Relative to the allegations of the complaint, the Investigation Report lacks material findings of fact necessary to reach a conclusion of law;

3. The material findings of fact in the Investigation Report are not supported by substantial evidence;
4. The legal conclusion in the Investigation Report is inconsistent with the law; and/or
5. In a case in which the School found noncompliance, the corrective actions fail to provide a proper remedy.

The appeal must be sent to CDE with: (1) a copy of the locally filed complaint; and (2) a copy of the School's Investigation Report. As of the date of adoption of this UCP, an online Appeal Assistance Form is available on the CDE website at [Appeal Assistance Form - Complaint Procedures](#) (CA Department of Education).

Upon notification by CDE that the complainant appealed the School's Investigation Report, the School shall forward all documents as required by 5 CCR 4633 to CDE within ten (10) calendar days of the date of notification.

The CDE may directly intervene in the complaint without waiting for action by the School when one of the conditions listed in Title 5, CCR, § 4650 exists, including cases in which the School has not taken action within sixty (60) days of the date the complaint was filed with the School. A direct complaint to CDE must identify the basis for direct filing of the complaint, which must include evidence that supports such a basis.

CIVIL LAW REMEDIES

A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies under state or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying laws, as applicable. Complainants may seek assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies that may be imposed by a court include, but are not limited to, injunctions and restraining orders.

UCP REQUIREMENTS REGARDING STATE PRESCHOOL HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES PURSUANT TO HSC SECTION 1596.7925

To file a UCP complaint regarding a state preschool health and safety issue pursuant to HSC Section 1596.7925 the complainant must file with the school's preschool program administrator or their designee. The School does not currently operate a preschool program.

A state preschool health and safety issues complaint about problems beyond the authority of a school's preschool program administrator shall be forwarded in a timely manner, but not to exceed 10 working days to the appropriate school official for resolution.

A state preschool health and safety issues complaint may be filed anonymously. A complainant who identifies themselves is entitled to a response if they indicate that a response is requested. A complaint form shall include a space to mark to indicate whether a response is requested. If Education Code Section 48985 is otherwise applicable, the response, if requested, and the school's Investigation Report shall be written in English and the primary language in which the complaint was filed.

A complaint form for a state preschool health and safety issue shall specify the location for filing a complaint. A complainant may add as much text to explain the complaint as they wish.

When investigating a UCP state preschool health and safety issue the preschool program administrator or the school's designee shall make all reasonable efforts to investigate any problem within their authority, and investigations shall begin within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the complaint. A valid complaint shall be remedied within a reasonable time period, but not to exceed 30 working days from the date the complaint was received. The resolution of the complaint shall be reported to the complainant within 45 working days of the initial filing. If the preschool program administrator makes this report, they shall also report the same information in the same timeframe to the school's designee.

Filing an Appeal Regarding UCP State Preschool Health and Safety Issues

A complainant not satisfied with the resolution of the preschool program administrator or the school's designee has the right to describe the complaint at a regularly scheduled hearing of the board. A complainant will not be precluded from filing an appeal to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction ("SSPI") if the complainant does not file a local appeal.

A complainant who is not satisfied with the resolution proffered by the preschool program administrator or the school's designee has the right to file an appeal to the SSPI within 30 calendar days of the date of the Investigation Report.

The complainant shall comply with the same appeal requirements of 5 CCR Section 4632.

The school shall report summarized data on the nature and resolution of all UCP state preschool health and safety issues complaints on a quarterly basis to the county superintendent of schools and its board. The summaries shall be publicly reported on a quarterly basis at a regularly scheduled meeting of the school's board. The report shall include the number of complaints by general subject area with the number of resolved and unresolved complaints.

All complaints and responses are public records.

UCP COMPLAINT FORM

This Complaint Form may be used to file a complaint subject to Journey's Uniform Complaint Procedures Policy. Complaints concerning pupil fees and/or the LCAP may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance. However, if you wish to receive a response, you must provide contact information. Complaints shall be handled in a confidential manner to respect the privacy of all parties to the fullest extent possible. Retaliation in any form for filing of a complaint is prohibited.

Response requested: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name (Optional for Pupil Fee & LCAP Complaints):	Mailing Address (Optional):
Phone Number (Optional):	Email Address (Optional):

Issue of complaint (please check all that apply):

- ☐ Pupil Fees
- ☐ Local Control and Accountability Plan ("LCAP")
- ☐ Discrimination, Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying in Programs or Activities
- ☐ Other Complaint Re: Programs and Activities

Date(s) of Problem: _____

Location of Problem (school name, address, and room number or location): _____

Describe specific nature of the complaint in detail. You may include as much text as necessary: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please file this complaint with the following Responsible Employee:

Gavin Keller, Executive Director
Journey School
27102 Foxborough
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
949-448-7232
gavin@journeyschool.net