School Police Officer Student Complaint Process

I. Purpose

This Procedure is intended to ensure that:

- All students and parents/guardians have a process to submit complaints pertaining to the quality of service and conduct of School Police Officers (SPO), and that the complaint process is accessible to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability status
- The student and parents/guardians who has submitted a complaint is protected from any type of retaliation
- The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) maintains effective and transparent procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving allegations of misconduct
- SDP provides a consistent approach to the investigation and resolution of complaints against SPO
- The SDP maintains integrity through a system of internal discipline, where objectivity and fairness are assured by impartial investigations and review

II. Process for Filing Complaints

The Complaint form process shall be used by any student or parent/guardian of the School District of Philadelphia to report an incident that pertains to the conduct of a School Police Officer. It may be used to document information regarding SPO misconduct.

In order for timely review of the facts, including interviewing witnesses, the complaint should be filed as soon as possible.

Students may file a SPO complaint at: https://www.philasd.org/studentrights/school-police-officer-student-complaint/

When the form is completed and saved it will be automatically sent to the Deputy Chief of the Office of Employee Relations (OER), and the Deputy Chief of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR). The Deputy Chief of Employee Relations will lead the investigation and will assign an investigator to handle the case. OSRR will act as the point of contact for the student/parent/guardian making complaint.
III. Anonymous Complaint

Students shall have a right to make an anonymous complaint. If an anonymous complainant provides a means of contact, the District shall report the results of the complaint to the contact listed on the anonymous complaint. However, if the complainant prefers to remain anonymous and does not provide a means of contact, the District will not directly report the results of the complaint to the complainant.

IV. Process for Handling, Investigating, Resolving, and Reporting Regarding Complaints

a. Log of Complaints and Quarterly Review Meeting

Data will be kept on a password secured spreadsheet, and will be reviewed quarterly by an internal committee to identify trends, and any possible steps that need to be taken to resolve issues or concerns.


The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities will be responsible for the preparation of the semi-annual report of data and trends. This report will be publicized on the website of the District’s Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The summary shall include the following:

1. Type of complaint;
2. Number of complaints and allegations against school police officers;
3. Complaints per school site;
4. Trends in complaints, if applicable;
5. Length of time for investigating and resolving/providing results of the complaint investigation;
6. Number of appeals;
7. Results of appeals that were filed;
8. Any steps taken by the District to resolve systemic concerns.

c. Timelines for Handling Complaints

Best efforts shall be used in every case to provide a written and/or verbal response to the complainant within 45 days of the date that the complaint is made, unless the complaint involves multiple individuals or incidents which, even in exercising their best efforts, the District cannot complete the investigation within the 45-day
timeline. In such instance, the OSRR shall inform the complainant in writing or by phone that additional time is needed.

d. Investigation of the Complaint and Conclusion

In conducting its investigation, the investigators may contact any individuals that the complainant has listed with respect to the allegations; follow-up by phone or in writing with the complainant to request any additional information or documents that may be helpful to investigation.

No officer who was involved in the incident that is the subject of the complaint or who otherwise has a conflict of interest shall be allowed to participate in the investigation of that complaint. The severity of the complaint will determine if the SPO involved needs to be removed from the school during the investigation.

When the investigation has concluded there will be a written report that includes what actions if any will be taken by the District in response to the complaint.

e. Appeal of the Complaint and Report

If the complainant disagrees with the outcome of the investigation, they shall have a right to appeal to the Chief of Student Support Services in writing via mail or email within 20 business days of receiving the results of the investigation from the OSRR. If you receive the results of the investigation with less than 20 business days left in the school year or during the summer your ability to appeal will be extended to the first week of the new school year.

The request for appeal must have the following information:

1. The name or complaint number;
2. The specific reason student and/or guardian believes that the complaint was wrongly resolved (for example: the investigator did not interview a key witness; the investigator did not believe a key witness was credible; investigator failed to consider a key piece of evidence, etc.); and
3. A requested remedy to the complaint.

Within 30 days, the Chief of Student Support Services shall either:

1. Affirm the original decision;
2. Request additional investigation; or
3. Reverse the original decision and notify the complainant

f. Prohibition Against Retaliation, Intimidation, Harassment, or Threats

No SPO or employee of the SDP shall retaliate against, intimidate, harass, or threaten any person making a complaint. Any SPO or SDP employee found to have retaliated against, intimidated, threatened or harassed any student attempting to make or who has made a complaint will be disciplined.

Examples of retaliation include, but are not limited to: hostile, dismissive, or unprofessional remarks by school staff to students who have filed complaints and/or their parents or guardians; and attempts to obstruct a student’s access to an education and educational opportunities.

g. Availability of Complaints and Information about How to File Complaints

The District shall make available information about the complaint process in every school in the District in a location that is easily accessible to students. The process shall be translated into Albanian, Chinese, French, Khmer, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The complaint form and process will be available on the website of the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities, and the Students section of the SDP homepage.