

La Cima Elementary Charter School Family and Stakeholder Complaint Policy

*Updated for the 2019-20 School Year
Board Approved in November 2019
Re-Disseminated to La Cima's families in November 2019*



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OUR MISSION

To prepare students for academic and life-long success through a rigorous and relevant academic program.

OUR VISION

To develop students who have the intellectual capacity, social capital and emotional strength of character to be personally successful and to act as effective change-makers in their communities.

In accordance with the requirements of § 2855(4) of the Education Law, any individual or group may bring a formal complaint to the Board of Trustees alleging a violation of the provisions of this article, the charter, or any other provision of law relating to the management or operation of the school. This policy describes both the formal and informal complaint processes, corresponding to different types of infractions. Although any individual or group may bring a formal complaint, La Cima has established an **informal complaint process** to expeditiously resolve matters in question. **Complaints that do not involve a suspected violation of La Cima'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 teacher or classes, and issues with grades, promotion, and retention and do not involve violations of law or charter.

La Cima's Board of Trustees encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate teachers, administration, or other campus staff.

Below is the procedural order of how La Cima requests that stakeholders file a complaint for informal complaints.



Often, issues or complaints can be resolved informally and do not need to involve the formal complaint process described below. Where appropriate, you 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 state law may be resolved informally, and you may wish to use this avenue before making a formal complaint. Using the informal process does not prevent you from using the formal complaint process later.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

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 speak with their child's teacher to resolve concerns. Teachers are asked to respond to families within 24-48 hours.

Assistant Principal

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 [24-48 hrs. for response], the family may raise the concern with the associated Assistant Principal [AP for grades K-2 or AP for grades 3-5].

Principal

If the issue remains unresolved, or the family has not heard back from the Assistant Principal within a reasonable amount of time [48 hrs. for a response], the family may raise the concern with the Principal. The principal, within their 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.

Executive Director

If after working with the principal, the issue is still unresolved, the family may raise the concern with the Executive Director. If the family has raised this concern with the Executive Director because the principal was unresponsive, the Executive Director may refer the family back to the Principal after alerting the Principal to the

concern. If the family has raised the concern with the Executive Director because the concern was not resolved to the satisfaction of the family, the Executive Director will interview relevant staff members to investigate the concern and the actions taken up to this point. This investigation may take 1-3 weeks, depending on the nature of the concern.

Board of Trustees

If after working with the Executive Director, the issue is still unresolved, the family may send their concern in writing to La Cima's Board of Trustees. The Board of



Trustees will then investigate the concern and provide a written response back to the family within 30 days.

If, after presentation of the complaint to the school's administrative leadership and subsequently the school's Board of Trustees, the individual or group determines that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, they may present that complaint to the New York State Education Department ("NYSED") as a conduit to the NYS Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond. If, after presentation of the complaint to the NYSED, the parties are not satisfied, they may take their written complaint to the US Department of Education ("USDOE").

Formal Complaint Process

A Formal Complaint is a complaint made when the law or charter is violated. Families making a formal complaint do not have to follow the informal process and can file a complaint directly with the La Cima Board of Trustees.

All formal complaints must be **submitted in writing** to the Board of Trustees, either via mail at: Chair of the Board of Trustees c/o La Cima Elementary Charter School, 800 Gates Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11221, or via email at board@lacimacharterschool.org.

The contents of the letter/email should include:

- A detailed statement of the complaint including the provision of the School's charter or law that you allege has been violated.
- What, if any, response you received from the school thus far.
- What specific action or relief you are seeking.
- Contact information for you: name, address, email address, telephone number.

Every effort will be made to respectfully address the matter to the satisfaction of the individual or group who present the complaint. The Board, as necessary, shall direct the school administration or other responsible parties to act upon the complaint and report to the Board. The Board of Trustees will respond to the complaint within 45 days of receipt of the formal written complaint.

If, after presentation of the complaint to the Board of Trustees, the complainant determines that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, the complainant may present the complaint to school's Authorizer before appealing to the NYS Board of Regents.

Directions for appealing to the authorizer

You must have a written copy of the school decision on your complaint to the Authorizer. Please send to:

Charter School Office
NYSED
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234
Attention - Charter School Office Leveled Complaint



Directions for appealing to the State Board of Regents

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome after going through the previous levels of the complaint process, you may write to the State Board of Regents. Complaints must be submitted in writing via mail at: Charter School Office, NYS Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234, Attention - Board of Regents Leveled Complaint, or via email to: charterschools@nysed.gov.

The subject line of the email should read: Complaint: La Cima Elementary Charter School.

The contents of the letter/email should include:

- A detailed statement of the complaint including the provision of the School's charter or law that you allege has been violated.
- What, if any, response you received from the School's Board of Trustees and the Charter Schools Institute
- Copies of all relevant correspondence between you and the School and you and the Charter Schools Institute. (You should maintain copies of all correspondence and materials for your own files.)
- What specific action or relief you are seeking.
- Contact information for you – name, address, email address, telephone number.

New York State ESSA-Funded Programs Complaint Procedures

Below is the process for resolving complaints submitted to the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) Office of ESSA-Funded Programs alleging that a local educational agency (LEA), grantee or NYSED has violated a law, rule, or regulation in the administration of any "covered Federal program" under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) identified below. This would apply if those filing a complaint believe there was a violation of the school's responsibility under funds from Title 1, 2 or 4.

These procedures offer parents and other stakeholders a process to file complaints and allow for the timely resolution of such complaints. Complaints filed against a local entity such as a school district, charter school, or grantee will be reviewed by NYSED's Office of ESSA-Funded Programs. Complaints filed against NYSED will be reviewed by NYSED's legal counsel.

A complainant may include any of the following: parents, public agencies, and other individuals or organizations. If the complainant is a minor, the complaint or appeal shall also be signed by his or her guardian, unless the statute or rule under which the complaint or appeal is filed prohibits this requirement. Complaints regarding equitable services for non-public schools should follow the procedures detailed at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/nonpub/Ombudsman.html>.



Each LEA in New York State is required to disseminate, free of charge, adequate information about these complaint procedures to parents of students, and appropriate private school officials or representatives.

La Cima Elementary Charter School

Formal Complaint Form

Date: ___/___/___

Name of Person Bringing Complaint:

Student Name: _____ Grade

Telephone# _____ Email (if available)

Provide a detailed statement of the nature of your original complaint including the date and individual to whom you spoke to.

