

# Protect Students First Act

## A6

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In accordance with the requirements found in Georgia House Bill 1084, the Protect Students First Act (the “Act” or “PFSA”), Excelsior Village Academies maintains the following Complaint Resolution Policy to set forth how eligible individuals may make complaints about Excelsior Village Academies’s adherence to the requirements of the Act.

Summary of the Protect Students First Act. The Protect Students First Act, the full text of which is available at <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/61477>, requires Excelsior Village Academies to prohibit its employees from discriminating against students and other employees based on race. Further, Excelsior Village Academies must ensure that its curricula and training programs encourage employees and students to practice tolerance and mutual respect and to refrain from judging others based on race. In doing so, it shall not advocate for “divisive concepts,” a term further defined in the Act.

The Act is not intended to and shall not be construed or applied in practice to, among other things, inhibit or violate state and federal Constitutional rights, prohibit Excelsior Village Academies from promoting tolerance, mutual respect, or cultural sensitivity or competence, or to ban the discussion of “divisive concepts” as part of a larger course of instruction in a professionally and academically appropriate manner without espousing personal political beliefs.

Further, the Act does not prohibit the use of curricula that addresses the topics of slavery, racial oppression, racial segregation, or racial discrimination, including topics relating to the enactment and enforcement of laws resulting in racial oppression, segregation, and discrimination in a professionally and academically appropriate manner and without espousing personal political beliefs.

**Individuals Who May Make Complaints Under This Policy.** Only the following individuals shall be permitted to make a complaint under this Policy:

- The parent/guardian of a current Excelsior Village Academies student
- An Excelsior Village Academies student who has reached the age of majority or is a lawfully emancipated minor
- Any current Excelsior Village Academies administrator, teacher, or other School personnel.

An individual making a complaint under this Policy shall be referred to herein as a “Complainant”.

**Request for Records.** Any individual able to bring a complaint under this policy may also, before or in conjunction with bringing a complaint, make a written request to the Chief Executive Officer for access to nonconfidential records reasonably believed to substantiate a complaint made under the Act. The Chief Executive Officer shall produce such records for inspection within a reasonable amount of time not to exceed three school days from the date of the written request. In any instance where some or all of the requested documents are unavailable within three school days of receipt of the request, but such documents do exist, the Chief Executive Officer shall within three days provide the Complainant with a description of such records and a timeline for when they will be available shall provide the documents or access thereto as soon as practicable but in no case later than thirty days after receipt of the written request. If the Principal denies a request for records or does not provide existing responsive records within thirty days, the requester may appeal such denial or failure to respond to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors must place such appeal on the agenda for its next public meeting. If it is too late for such appeal to appear on the next meeting's agenda, the appeal must be included on the agenda for the subsequent Meeting.

**Complaint Procedures.** To initiate a complaint under this Policy, a Complainant shall submit to the Chief Executive Officer, in writing, a reasonably detailed description of the alleged violation of the Protecting Students First Act.

By way of example, a reasonably detailed description would generally include the date on which the alleged violation occurred, in which course or during what school-sponsored event the alleged violation occurred, the individual(s) accused of committing the alleged violation, any witnesses to the alleged violation, and details of the substance of the alleged violation (i.e., what remarks were made or what materials were presented that are objectionable). Further details may be found in Curriculum Complaints (Protect Students First Act) Regulation A6-R3 and related exhibits.

**Investigation of Complaints.** Within five school days of receiving a written complaint, the Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee shall review the complaint and take reasonable steps to investigate its allegations. What is considered "reasonable" will vary based on the details of the Complaint, but generally will involve interviewing the Complainant, interviewing the individual(s) identified as having violated the Act, interviewing any witnesses to the alleged violation as needed, and/or reviewing the allegedly objectionable materials at issue, if any.

The Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee shall thereafter meet with the Complainant within ten days of receiving the written complaint, unless another schedule is mutually agreed to by the Complainant and the Chief Executive Officer, and inform the Complainant whether a violation occurred, in whole or in part, and, if such a violation was found to have occurred, what remedial steps have been or will be taken; provided, however, that the confidentiality of student or personnel information shall not be violated.

If the Complainant so requests, the Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee shall within three days of the above referenced meeting, provide to the Complainant a written summary of findings of the investigation and a statement of remedial measures, if any; provided, however, that such written response shall not disclose any confidential student or personnel information.

**State Review.** Complainants dissatisfied with the school-level process may submit their complaint to the State Charter Schools Commission under the SCSC's published complaint procedures. The SCSC does not serve as an appellate body but reviews compliance with law and the charter contract.

### **Accountability and Compliance.**

The Chief Executive Officer or designee shall:

- Ensure that this policy, along with the Curriculum Complaints (Protect Students First Act) Regulation and required exhibits/forms, is published annually in the Student & Family Handbook, Employee Handbook, and on the school's website.
- Be responsible for timely receipt, investigation, and response to all complaints filed under this policy.

The Governing Board shall:

- Review and decide appeals under this policy, and shall ensure final decisions are reported to the school's authorizer in accordance with state law and charter contract requirements.
- Ensure that complaints under this policy are included in annual reporting on complaints/grievances to the Board, along with actions taken.

### **Cross Reference.**

This policy operates alongside the school's Complaints, Grievances, and Whistleblower Policy, which governs general complaints not specifically covered under the PSFA. Complaints alleging civil rights violations, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation remain subject to the school's Non-Discrimination and Civil Rights Policy.

### **Legal and Regulatory References.**

O.C.G.A. § 20-1-11 (Protect Students First Act)  
Georgia House Bill 1084 (2022 Session)  
O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1160 (Appeals to the State Board of Education)  
O.C.G.A. § 20-2-59 (Non-discrimination in public schools)

Georgia State Board of Education Rules relating to curriculum, instruction, and non-discrimination

Charter contract requirements regarding curriculum and complaints

School's Complaints, Grievances, and Whistleblower Policy (cross-reference)

Curriculum Complaints (Protect Students First Act) Regulation A6-R3 and related exhibits/forms (cross-reference)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Approved By</b>
~ 11/1/2024	Initial policy adoption	Governing Board
10/23/2025	Revision: (explanation)	Governing Board