

Civil Rights Complaint Procedures

Hoosac Valley regional School District will comply with the Civil Rights Requirements outlined in FNS Instruction 113-1 and the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding between United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service Civil Rights Division and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office for Food and Nutrition Programs. If a participant, parent/guardian, or potential participant reports a concern that involves a federally or state protected class we will inform, accept, document, and share the complaint or concern in accordance with the procedures outlined here.

Procedures

The school food authority (SFA) will inform the person to whom potential discrimination may have or perhaps they feel have potentially occurred of their right to file an official complaint. The SFA will consider if parental /guardian notification is appropriate.

- The SFA will offer to share the complaint process steps and let them know it can be submitted anonymously.
- The SFA will ask if they would like to submit an official complaint.
- If they do not want to submit a formal complaint, The SFA will ask the person how we can help. The SFA will clarify what they want us to do with the information they are giving us. This may be a person who is reporting a concern because they want us to help them and is NOT interested in submitting an official Civil Rights Complaint.
- When the person reports satisfaction that the issue has been resolved, no further steps need to be taken.
- If they do want to submit a formal complaint, The SFA will walk them through USDA's complaint process and clarify if they want to use USDA's process on their own or if they want The SFA to "accept" their complaint or help them submit to USDA.
- If they would like to submit the complaint on their own, The SFA will ask if we can do anything else to help resolve the issue in the meantime and no further steps need to be taken.
- If they would like the SFA to "accept" the complaint: The SFA will accept, document and share the complaint per instructions below.
 - The SFA will remember before beginning this step: Someone can be "reporting a concern" they would like addressed but would NOT be submitting an official Civil Rights complaint. The SFA will be sure to clarify what the individual's intention is. If they choose NOT to submit an official Civil Rights complaint the SFA will continue to reach a resolution that is mutually agreed upon.
 - The SFA will ensure the complaint procedures do not prevent a complaint from being accepted.
 - The SFA will offer a complaint form but will accept the complaint in any form given.
 - The complaint can be submitted through any form, or person or date/time.

The SFA can offer the use of a standard form or refer them to a specific person but ultimately if a person wants to submit a complaint verbally in the moment that complaint will be accepted.

The SFA will document the complaint in a complaint log specific to Child Nutrition Programs.

- The SFA will document how the complaint was given: In writing or verbally?
- Whoever receives a complaint will document the event by filling out the fields on the complaint log.
- If a complaint is given verbally we will make a detailed record of the complaint.
- The staff member who received the complaint must transcribe it.
- The SFA will ensure at a minimum, the log contains the complainant(s) name, contact information, the location (including country), nature and date of the alleged discrimination. Name of individual(s) and organization(s) alleged to have engaged in discrimination, basis of alleged discrimination, date of referral to DESE and USDA, the findings of any investigation by FNS, and a descriptive disposition of the final complaint including any corrective action planned or taken.

The SFA will share the complaint within 5 days with DESE and USDA.

- The SFA will send a copy of the complaint we accepted by any of the following methods:

USDA

- mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

- fax: (202) 690-7442; or

- email: program.intake@usda.gov

DESE

Problem Resolution System Office

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149

Telephone: 781-338-3700

TTY: N.E.T. Relay: 1-800-439-2370

Fax: 781-338-3710

Email: compliance@doe.mass.edu

If you would like support in responding to reported concerns or Civil Rights complaints you can contact

FNP at Nutriton@doe.mass.edu 781-338-6480, for technical assistance.