



Phenix City Schools Child Nutrition Program

Civil Rights Complaint Procedure

Phenix City Schools Child Nutrition Program is committed to ensuring that all students, parents, and program participants have equal access to Child Nutrition Program benefits and services and that all allegations of discrimination are handled promptly and appropriately.

Receiving a Civil Rights Complaint

Any person who believes that they have experienced discrimination in the operation of a USDA Child Nutrition Program may file a complaint.

A complaint may be received **verbally or in writing**. If an individual makes a verbal complaint or needs assistance completing a written complaint, Child Nutrition staff will provide appropriate assistance.

All Child Nutrition employees are responsible for recognizing a potential civil rights complaint and immediately referring the complaint to the CNP Director. Employees should not attempt to discourage an individual from filing a complaint or independently determine whether the allegation is valid before reporting it.

Information to Document

When a civil rights complaint is received, staff should obtain as much of the following information as possible:

- Name, address, telephone number, or other contact information for the complainant;
- Name and location of the school or program involved;
- Date of the alleged incident;
- Description of what occurred;
- The basis on which discrimination is alleged;
- Names of individuals involved or witnesses, when available; and
- Any supporting documentation provided by the complainant.

A complaint should still be accepted and forwarded even when all information is not available.

District Procedure

Upon receiving a complaint involving the Child Nutrition Program:

1. The complaint will be **immediately forwarded to the CNP Director**.
2. The CNP Director will document the complaint and maintain the information in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements.
3. The complaint will be forwarded through the appropriate **State Agency/USDA civil rights complaint process**, as required.
4. Phenix City Schools will cooperate with requests for information or documentation associated with the review or investigation of the complaint.
5. **Retaliation against any individual for filing a civil rights complaint or participating in a civil rights investigation is prohibited.**

Filing Directly With USDA

Individuals must also be informed that they have the right to file a program discrimination complaint directly with the **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** and are not required to resolve the complaint with the school or district before contacting USDA.

A complainant may complete the **USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027)** or submit a written letter containing the information requested on the form.

Complaints may be submitted to USDA using the contact information contained in the **current USDA Nondiscrimination Statement and Program Discrimination Complaint Form**.

Phenix City Schools will provide the USDA complaint form and assistance accessing the complaint process upon request.

Language and Disability Assistance

Individuals with Limited English Proficiency will be provided appropriate language assistance when needed. Individuals with disabilities who require an alternative means of communication or assistance with the complaint process will also be provided appropriate assistance.

Staff Responsibility

All Child Nutrition employees receive annual Civil Rights training and are expected to understand how to recognize and appropriately refer a potential discrimination complaint.

If a person states or implies that they believe they were treated differently, denied benefits, or discriminated against because of a protected basis, staff should treat the concern as a potential Civil Rights complaint and immediately notify the CNP Director.