BOARD OF TRUSTEES — POLICY ADOPTION DOCUMENT

This policy is submitted for adoption by the Board of Trustees via consent round.

Austin Waldorf School | Parents Guardians & Students | Governance

AUSTIN WALDORF SCHOOL

COMMUNITY COMPLAINT, GRIEVANCE & WHISTLEBLOWER REPORTING POLICY

Adopted: 2025–2026 Academic Year | Supersedes all prior related provisions

1. Background

Austin Waldorf School is committed to maintaining an open, respectful, and accountable relationship with the families it serves.

2. Purpose

This policy establishes clear, consistent, and confidential processes for parents, guardians, and students of Austin Waldorf School to raise concerns about school operations, classroom situations, or potential misconduct. It is the community-specific Complaint, Grievance & Whistleblower Policy and supersedes the Parent Guidelines for Resolving Grievances in the Community Handbook (2025–2026).

3. Definitions

Concerned Person	A person who has a concern about AWS that they wish to be addressed.
Complaint	A concern about an interpersonal conflict, classroom situation, governance process question, or school operations matter warrants structured attention.
Grievance	A concern involving potential violations of law, school policy, fiduciary duty, IRS regulations, ethical standards, or matters with legal implications for the school.
Whistleblower	A trustee, employee, parent, guardian, or other covered party who, in good faith, reports suspected misconduct, illegal activity, financial irregularity, policy violation, or unethical conduct.
Retaliation	Any adverse action taken against a person because they submitted a good-faith complaint or participated in a related investigation. Adverse action includes, but is not limited to: termination, demotion, removal from committees, exclusion from communications, social pressure, negative characterization, or any other penalty.

Executive Committee (EC)	The standing committee of the Board of Trustees as defined in the AWS Bylaws, responsible for Board operations between full Board meetings.
Head of School (HoS)	The chief administrative officer of Austin Waldorf School, employed by and accountable to the Board of Trustees.
Business Day	Business days means Monday through Friday, excluding school holidays and scheduled breaks as published on the school's official academic calendar.

4. Applicability

This policy applies to Concerned Persons who are:

- Parents and guardians of currently enrolled students
- Enrolled students (as appropriate to age and circumstance)

This policy does not apply to Concerned Persons who are AWS employees or members of the AWS Board of Trustees.

5. Policy Statement

5.1. Complaint Process

The complaint process applies to concerns about classroom situations, school programs, community relationships, or school operations that do not rise to the level of a formal grievance but warrant structured attention.

Step 1: Direct Communication. When the complaint involves a classroom situation, the Concerned Person communicates directly and kindly with the teacher(s) involved. This step is fundamental to the Waldorf approach to community and should be attempted before escalating.

Step 2: Section Director. If unresolved, the Concerned Person may submit the complaint in writing using the AWS Complain, Grievance, and Whistleblower Form to, and request a meeting with the Section Director. The Section Director will meet with all parties within ten (10) business days and issue a written follow-up to the Concerned Person.

Step 3: Head of School. If resolution is not reached with the Section Director, the Concerned Person requests a meeting with the Head of School. The HoS will acknowledge the request within five (5) business days and issue a written response within fifteen (15) business days after the meeting takes place.

Step 4: Executive Committee. If the complaint concerns the Head of School, or if resolution is not achieved through the steps above, the Concerned Person may submit a written complaint to the Secretary of the Board, who will route it to the Executive Committee for review. The Board Secretary will acknowledge receipt within five (5) business days.

Once a complaint has been resolved it should be considered closed unless new material information becomes available. Parties are expected not to continue raising the same issue after a final resolution has been issued.

Important: The Board of Trustees, Head of School, HR Manager, and Section Directors may not address complaints that are: submitted anonymously; based on hearsay or submitted without firsthand knowledge; or submitted without following the process outlined above.

5.2. Grievance Procedure

The grievance procedure applies to formal concerns involving potential violations of law, school policy, or matters with serious legal or ethical implications for the school or the family.

Step 1: Submission. The Concerned Person submits the grievance in writing using the Complaint, Grievance, and Whistleblower Reporting Form (see Appendix) to the appropriate recipient as indicated in the table below:

If the concern involves…	Submit form to…
A classroom or teacher situation	Head of School
A Section Director	Head of School
The Head of School	Executive Committee (via Secretary of the Board)
A Board Trustee	Board President (or Board Secretary if the President is implicated)

Step 2: Initial Review. The Head of School (or, if the HoS is implicated, the Executive Committee) will review the grievance and respond in writing to the Concerned Person within fifteen (15) business days.

Step 3: Investigation. When a formal investigation is initiated, it will be conducted impartially and with confidentiality maintained to the extent practicable.

Step 4: Resolution and Written Notice. A written determination will be issued to the Concerned Person within fifteen (15) business days of the conclusion of the investigation. The report will include:

- A summary of findings
- Any corrective action taken or recommended
- A statement of resolution

Step 5: Appeal. For parent grievances escalated to the Board: if resolution is not achieved through the steps above, the Concerned Parent may submit the grievance in writing using the AWS Complaint, Grievance, and Whistleblower Form, to the Secretary of the Board. The Board

will consider the matter at a regularly scheduled meeting and issue a final written determination to the Concerned Person. The Board's determination is final.

5.3. Whistleblower Protections

A whistleblower is any trustee, employee, parent, guardian, or other covered party who in good faith reports suspected misconduct. Covered concerns include:

- Health and safety violations
- Financial mismanagement or irregularities
- Harassment or discrimination in the workplace
- Violations of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Wage and hour violations
- Fiduciary breaches by trustees or the Board
- Board-level misconduct or governance violations
- Any other illegal activities or serious policy violations

All good-faith reports are fully protected under this policy, even if the report is not substantiated after investigation, provided the report was not made with knowledge that it was false.

Reporting Channels for Whistleblower Concerns:

- Concerns about general school operations: report in writing to the Head of School.
- Concerns about the Head of School: submit in writing to the Secretary of the Board, who will share with the Executive Committee.
- Concerns about a trustee: submit in writing to the Board President (or Board Secretary if the President is implicated).
- Concerns about the Executive Committee as a whole: submit in writing to the full Board of Trustees.

All whistleblower reports should include a full statement of the acts or omissions, relevant dates, and a statement that the report is made in good faith under this policy.

5.4. Non-Retaliation

No person acting in good faith under this policy will be subject to retaliation of any kind. This protection applies to any person who:

- Submits a complaint, or grievance
- Reports a whistleblower concern
- Provides information in connection with an investigation
- Otherwise exercises any right under this policy

This protection applies regardless of whether the underlying concern is ultimately substantiated.

Any trustee or employee who engages in retaliation against a Concerned Person is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination or removal from the Board.

5.5. Confidentiality

All complaints and grievances filed under this policy will be treated with strict confidentiality. The identity of the reporting party will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to conduct a thorough investigation or as required by law.

All persons involved in any stage of the process including the reporting party, the subject of the complaint, witnesses, and decision-makers are expected to maintain confidentiality.

5.6. External Reporting Rights

Nothing in this policy limits any person's right to report concerns to external authorities, including:

- The Texas Attorney General's Office, which has jurisdiction over nonprofit organizations
- The Internal Revenue Service
- Applicable federal or state regulatory bodies

The school will not retaliate against any person for making a report to an external authority.

5.7. Legal Notice

This policy does not supersede or replace rights under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, or other applicable statutes.

5.8. Community Commitments

The Board of Trustees and School Administration commit to:

- Maintaining a reporting environment in which concerns can be raised without fear of reprisal
- Handling all complaints, grievances, and whistleblower concerns with confidentiality consistent with a fair investigation
- Taking corrective action promptly when violations are substantiated

- Documenting all complaints, grievances, and whistleblower concerns and their resolutions.
- Prohibiting retaliation against any person acting in good faith under this policy
- Providing a written response at each stage within the timelines set forth in this policy

6. References

Document Name	Link / Location
AWS Employee Complaint and Grievance Policy (§13)	Policy Handbook, 2025–2026, pp. 68–72
AWS Conflict of Interest Policy (Board)	Board Governance Records Link
AWS Bylaws (current version)	Link Board Governance Records
IRS Form 990, Part VI — Governance, Section B	www.irs.gov/form990
Texas Business Organizations Code (TBOC)	statutes.capitol.texas.gov
ISAS Board Governance Reference Adaptive Governance White Paper	AWS Board Records, January 2026

7. Effective Date

This policy takes effect immediately upon adoption by the Board of Trustees and supersedes:

- The Parent Guidelines for Resolving Grievances in the Community Handbook, 2025–2026

8. Amendment History

Future amendments will be tracked below. Employees will be notified of revisions; it is the responsibility of each employee, trustee, and community member to review and comply with the most current version.

Date	Summary of Amendment	Approved By
	Initial adoption — policy tailored from Unified Complaint, Grievance & Whistleblower Policy	Board of Trustees

APPENDIX: AUSTIN WALDORF SCHOOL COMPLAINT, GRIEVANCE, AND WHISTLEBLOWER REPORTING FORM

For use by Parent / Guardian / Student under this Policy

Complete all fields and submit in writing to the appropriate recipient identified in Sections 4 (Routing Guide). Attach any supporting documentation. This form may be submitted in person, by email, or by mail.

Date of Submission

Your Name

Role / Relationship to AWS

Employee / Trustee / Parent or Guardian / Other (specify): _____

Contact Information

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Subject of Complaint or Grievance

Name and role of person(s) involved, if applicable:

Nature of Concern

Complaint / Grievance / Whistleblower Report (circle one)

A complaint is a concern about an interpersonal conflict, classroom situation, governance process question, or school operations matter.

A grievance is a concern involving potential violations of law, school policy, fiduciary duty, IRS regulations, ethical standards, or matters with legal implications for the school.

A whistleblower is a trustee, employee, parent, guardian, or other covered party who, in good faith, reports suspected misconduct, illegal activity, financial irregularity, policy violation, or unethical conduct.

Description of Concern

Describe the conduct or situation in detail, including relevant dates, individuals involved, and any supporting information. Attach additional pages as needed.

Prior Steps Taken

Describe any prior informal or complaint-process attempts at resolution, if applicable.

Desired Outcome (Optional)

What resolution are you seeking?

Signature & Date

Signature: _____ Date: _____