

## **Complaint Policy**

Vertus is committed to resolving concerns and complaints in a manner in which all parties feel respectfully heard and understood. We encourage those with concerns to first contact the individual involved to give him/her an opportunity to respond or resolve the concern informally. If the issue is not resolved, there are two procedures outlined below. The first procedure is for informal complaints regarding the instruction, operations or administration of the school. The second procedure is for formal complaints involving a belief that the school has violated a term of its charter or the law. In all cases, the school prohibits retaliation against complainants. The school will attempt to keep information about complainants confidential, except where it is necessary or appropriate to disclose it.

### **Informal complaints**

Informal complaints are issues that arise which do not involve the belief that Vertus Charter School has violated a term of its charter or the law. The following process will be followed to resolve informal complaints:

- If complaints are regarding treatment of students by staff or fellow students, the complainant should contact the Dean of Students.
- If complaints are regarding daily services, such as transportation, food or facilities, the complainant should contact the Chief Operating Officer.
- If complaints are about student grades or other instructional concerns, the complainant should contact the Teacher or Lead Teacher.
- If the concern is still unresolved, the complainant should contact the Chief Executive Officer.
- If after speaking to the Chief Executive Officer, the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant may issue a written appeal addressed to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Vertus Charter School {address to come}. The complainant may also attend a Board meeting and speak during the regularly-scheduled public comment period. Board meeting times and locations are posted on the school's website at [VertusSchool.org](http://VertusSchool.org).

### **Formal complaints**

Formal complaints are defined according to section 2855 (4) of the NYS Charter Schools Act, which explains that any individual, including parents, who believe that a charter school has violated a term of its charter or the law may complain formally to the school's Board of



# Vertus Charter School

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Trustees and seek relief. If an individual issues a formal complaint about the school, the following process will be followed:

1. All complaints must be issued in writing and addressed to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, {address}.
2. Complaints may not be anonymous; there must be an individual or group who signs the complaint and is responsible for providing relevant information regarding the complaint.
3. The Chairman of the Board can investigate the complaint or can delegate an unbiased board member, staff person or outside person to investigate the complaint.
4. During the investigation, the investigator will gather all relevant evidence (including first person statements from staff, parents and students as necessary, copies of any documents at issue, and pursuing all other leads) to fairly assess the situation and develop an understanding of what happened.
5. At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will prepare a report for the Chairman, who will, in turn, propose action steps. The Chairman will present the recommended action steps to the Board, which will be responsible for approving or denying the Chairman's recommendations. Should the Board not approve the recommendations, members may suggest and vote on alternative action steps for resolving the complaint. All complaints will be acted upon by the Board within 30 days of receiving the formal written complaint, or by the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board, whichever is longer, unless extenuating circumstances outlined in the complaint require an expedited review.
6. The Chairman will send written notification to the complainant in writing within 15 business days of the decision regarding the action steps approved by the Board of Trustees.
7. If the complainant believes that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, s/he may present the complaint to the New York State Education Department Charter School Office, either via mail at: Charter School Office, NYS Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234, or via email to: [charterschools@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:charterschools@mail.nysed.gov) The subject line of the email should read: Complaint: [Name of School].