
PUBLIC RELEASE

growingSTEMS Grievance and Investigation Process

Purpose

This grievance and investigation policy was created to clearly outline the process for formal grievances and any subsequent investigations. The goal behind this policy document is to explain the scope and definition of grievances, outline the process for reporting and closing a grievance, and describe the disciplinary action steps for policy violations.

Grievance Process

A written report of a grievance must be filed with the Executive Director, citing specifics of the complaint. This may include (but is not limited to) policies violated, a specific date, individuals involved, any witnesses, and circumstances.

The Executive Director must work with an investigation team comprising no fewer than two (2) but no greater than four (4) additional individuals to investigate the grievance. The investigation team, excluding the Executive Director, must contain individuals from at least two (2) of the four (4) categories. No single individual can satisfy more than one (1) category requirement.

- Program mentor
- Board of Director representative
- Parent or adult program participant
- External representative

The investigation must be allowed seventy-two (72) hours to complete and must begin no later than forty-eight (48) hours after the grievance is received. The intent is that the investigation commences and concludes within a reasonable period. Deviation from this timeline must be reported to the Board of Directors.

The investigation team must inform the accused before any further action is taken.

The investigation team must be permitted the freedom to investigate the grievance as they deem appropriate and without outside interference.

The investigation team, under the guidance of the Executive Director, must develop a written report of the findings and recommendations for action. This report will be kept on file in the accused's record. The entire investigation team must fully agree upon and support the contents of the investigation report.

Discipline Process

If the grievance has been found to contain merit, as determined by the investigation report, the Executive Director is permitted to take any appropriate action listed below

- Formally reprimanding the accused in writing, with a copy placed in the member's record.
- Suspending, or in some way temporarily limiting the member's participation.
- Referring the matter to the Board of Directors for further action.

The Executive Director is permitted to take actions that are not enumerated. However, these additional actions are subject to review or modification by the Board of Directors.

Review and Appeal Process.

Once the investigation is complete, the Executive Director shall meet individually with the aggrieved and the accused to inform them of the results of the investigation and any disciplinary/remediation taken.

If either the aggrieved or accused is dissatisfied with the Executive Director's decision, he or she may request an appeal at the next regular Board of Directors meeting. To overrule the Executive Director's decision, a majority of the voting directors present must vote to overturn it.

The Board of Directors may not take any action on any investigation, beyond reviewing the written documentation and asking clarifying questions of the Executive Director, without an appeal by the accused, the aggrieved, the Executive Director, or a majority of the investigators.

Special Cases

The Executive Director must deviate from these established and preceding steps when a grievance is submitted under the following circumstances.

- A grievance that names the Executive Director as the accused, aggrieved, or as a substantial witness to the investigation.
- A grievance that names a director as an accused, solely for actions or inactions taken due to their duties on the growingSTEMS Board of Directors.
- A grievance that alleges criminal or civil violations.

Should a grievance be submitted under these above circumstances, the Executive Director must immediately refer this matter to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will promptly determine an alternative investigation method. Any action against the Executive Director will be determined by the Board of Directors and must be consistent with the growingSTEMS bylaws.

If a grievance substantially involves a director (i.e., an accused, aggrieved, substantial witness), either as a result of their duties on the Board or through their participation in any growingSTEMS program, that director must be recused from any decisions made by the Board of Directors.

Retaliation

Individuals who report possible or actual misconduct and those who cooperate in an investigation must be protected from retaliation. A satisfactory investigation will only occur if members understand that they will not be adversely affected through their participation in the investigation.

All members should be aware of the signs of retaliation. If a member believes that anyone who has filed a grievance or anyone who has cooperated with an investigation is receiving any type of negative treatment as a result of their cooperation, they are encouraged to notify the investigation team or any director at once.

Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest.

Grievance details must only be shared with members who need to know about the issue to appropriately and adequately review and investigate the concern.

In the event a grievance involves an individual who would typically be involved or made aware of such a concern, the investigation team must take all reasonable steps to avoid any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

Violations

Deviation from this approved policy must be referred to the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.

Effective Date

This document is effective immediately upon the approval of the document by the growingSTEMS Board of Directors.

Cancellation

This guidance is canceled upon approval of an updated document by the growingSTEMS Board of Directors.

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