

Monte Vista School District Child Nutrition Program Civil Rights Procedures

In compliance with Titles VI & VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements, federal law, state law, and Monte Vista School District policy,

Monte Vista School District prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or need for special education services, sex, gender identity, religion, ancestry, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, income derived from any public assistance program, and protected genetic information, in the child nutrition program that it operates.

Complaint procedures have been established for students, parents, employees and members of the public. The following person has been identified as the compliance officer for the district:

Superintendent of Schools
Monte Vista School District
345 East Prospect Avenue
Monte Vista, Colorado 81144
(719)852-5996
RWebb@monte.k12.co.us

All civil rights complaints related to the Child Nutrition Program will be forwarded by the compliance officer to the Colorado Department of Education Office of School Nutrition.

Outside agencies

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination outside of the district, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or e-mail at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Monte Vista School District
Child Nutrition Program
Civil Rights Procedures
(Complaint and Compliance Process)**

Monte Vista School District is committed to providing a working and learning environment that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. The district shall promptly respond to concerns and complaints of unlawful discrimination and/or harassment; take action in response when unlawful discrimination and/or harassment is discovered; impose appropriate sanctions on offenders in a case-by-case manner; and protect the privacy of all those involved in unlawful discrimination and/or harassment complaints as required by state and federal law. When appropriate, the complaint shall be referred to law enforcement for investigation.

The district has adopted the following procedures to promptly and fairly address concerns and complaints about unlawful discrimination and/or harassment in the child nutrition program that it operates.

Definitions

1. “Compliance officer” means an employee designated by the Board to receive complaints of alleged unlawful discrimination and harassment. The compliance officer shall be identified by name/title, address, telephone number and email address. If the designated individual is not qualified or is unable to act as such, the Board shall designate an administrator who shall serve until a successor is appointed.
2. “Aggrieved individual” shall mean a student, the parents or guardians of a student under the age of 18 acting on behalf of a student, an employee of the district, or member of the public who is directly affected by and/or is witness to an alleged violation of Board policies prohibiting unlawful discrimination or harassment in the district’s child nutrition program.

Compliance officer’s duties

The compliance officer shall be responsible for conducting an investigation and coordinating all complaint procedures and processes for any alleged violation of federal or state statute or Board policy prohibiting unlawful discrimination or harassment. The compliance officer’s duties shall include providing notice to students, parents/guardians of students, employees and the general public concerning the compliance process, providing training for district staff regarding the prohibition of discrimination/harassment in all district programs, activities and employment practices, disseminating information concerning the forms and procedures for the filing of complaints, ensuring the prompt investigation of all complaints, coordinating hearing procedures, and identifying and addressing any patterns or systemic problems that arise during the review of complaints. The compliance officer will forward all civil rights complaints related to the Child Nutrition Program to the Colorado Department of Education Office of School Nutrition. The compliance officer may delegate any or all of the foregoing responsibilities as necessary and/or appropriate under the circumstances.

Complaint procedure

An aggrieved individual is encouraged to promptly report the incident. All reports received by teachers, counselors, principals or other district employees shall be promptly forwarded to the

compliance officer. If the compliance officer is the individual alleged to have engaged in the prohibited conduct, the complaint shall be forwarded to the Board of Education.

Any aggrieved individual may file with the compliance officer a complaint charging the district, another student or any school employee with unlawful discrimination or harassment. Complaints may be made orally or in writing.

All complaints shall include a detailed description of the alleged events, the dates the alleged events occurred and names of the parties involved, including any witnesses. The complaint shall be made as soon as possible after the incident.

The compliance officer shall confer with the aggrieved individual and/or the alleged victim of the unlawful discrimination or harassment as soon as is reasonably possible, in order to obtain a clear understanding of the basis of the complaint.

Following the initial meeting with the aggrieved individual and/or alleged victim, the compliance officer shall attempt to meet with the individual alleged to have engaged in the prohibited conduct and, if a student, his or her parents/guardians in order to obtain a response to the complaint. Such person(s) shall be informed of all allegations that, in the compliance officer's judgment, are necessary to achieve a full and accurate disclosure of material information or to otherwise resolve the complaint.

At the initial meetings, the compliance officer shall explain the avenues for informal and formal action, provide a description of the complaint process, and explain that both the victim and the individual alleged to have engaged in prohibited conduct have the right to exit the informal process and request a formal resolution of the matter at any time. The compliance officer shall also explain that whether or not the individual files a written complaint or otherwise requests action, the district is required by law to take steps to correct the unlawful discrimination or harassment and to prevent recurring unlawful discrimination, harassment or retaliation against anyone who makes a report or participates in an investigation. The compliance officer shall also explain that any request for confidentiality shall be honored so long as doing so does not preclude the district from responding effectively to prohibited conduct and preventing future prohibited conduct.

Informal action

If the aggrieved individual and/or the individual alleged to have engaged in the prohibited conduct requests that the matter be resolved in an informal manner and/or the compliance officer believes that the matter is suitable to such resolution, the compliance officer may attempt to resolve the matter informally through mediation, counseling or other non-disciplinary means. If both parties feel a resolution has been achieved through the informal process, then no further compliance action must be taken. No party shall be compelled to resolve a complaint of unlawful discrimination or harassment informally and either party may request an end to an informal process at any time. Informal resolution shall not be used to process complaints against a school employee and shall not be used between students where the underlying offense involves sexual assault or other act of violence.

Formal action

If informal resolution is inappropriate, unavailable or unsuccessful, the compliance officer shall promptly investigate the allegations to determine whether and/or to what extent, unlawful discrimination or harassment has occurred. The compliance officer may consider the following types of information in determining whether unlawful discrimination or harassment occurred:

- a. statements by any witness to the alleged incident,
- b. evidence about the relative credibility of the parties involved,
- c. evidence relative to whether the individual alleged to have engaged in prohibited conduct has been found to have engaged in prohibited conduct against others,
- d. evidence of the aggrieved individual and/or alleged victim's reaction or change in behavior following the alleged prohibited conduct,
- e. evidence about whether the alleged victim and/or aggrieved individual took action to protest the conduct,
- f. evidence and witness statements or testimony presented by the parties involved,
- g. other contemporaneous evidence, and/or
- h. any other evidence deemed relevant by the compliance officer.

In deciding whether conduct is a violation of law or policy, all relevant circumstances shall be considered by the compliance officer, including:

- a. the degree to which the conduct affected one or more student's education or one or more employee's work environment,
- b. the type, frequency and duration of the conduct,
- c. the identity of and relationship between the individual alleged to have engaged in the prohibited conduct and the aggrieved individual and/or alleged victim,
- d. the number of individuals alleged to have engaged in the prohibited conduct and number of victims of the prohibited conduct,
- e. the age of the individual alleged to have engaged in the prohibited conduct and the aggrieved individual and/or alleged victim,
- f. the size of the school, location of the incident and context in which it occurred,
- g. other incidents at the school.

Within 10 school days, the compliance officer shall prepare a written decision with specific factual findings and sanctions or other remedial action, including as appropriate, recommendations to the Board for disciplinary or other action.

To the extent permitted by federal and state law, all parties, including the parents/guardians of all students involved, shall be notified in writing by the superintendent of the final outcome of the investigation and all steps taken by the district.

Hearing procedure

For allegations under Section 504 and as otherwise required by law, the aggrieved individual may request a hearing. This hearing procedure will not address guilt or innocence or disciplinary consequences which shall instead be governed by the Board's discipline policies and procedures.

The hearing shall be informal. A student shall be entitled to be represented by his/her parent or by an attorney. An employee shall be entitled to be represented by an attorney or other representative of his/her choice. The complainant may appear at the hearing and shall be entitled to present testimony and other evidence. Formal rules of evidence shall not apply. The compliance officer or designee may represent the district at the hearing and shall likewise be entitled to present testimony and other evidence. The hearing shall be closed to the public.

Within 10 school days after the hearing, the hearing officer shall issue a written decision based upon evidence presented at the administrative hearing, including any remedial or corrective action deemed appropriate. Remedial actions shall include measures designed to stop the unlawful discrimination or harassment, correct its negative impact on the affected individual, ensure that the conduct does not recur, and restore lost educational opportunities.

Any party not satisfied with a decision made by the superintendent may present his/her concerns to the Board. Any action taken by the Board shall be final.

Nothing contained herein shall be interpreted to confer upon any person the right to a hearing independent of a Board policy, administrative procedure, statute, rule, regulation or agreement expressly conferring such right. This process shall apply, unless the context otherwise requires and unless the requirements of another policy, procedure, statute, rule, regulation or agreement expressly contradicts with this process, in which event the terms of the contrary policy, procedure, law, rule, regulation or agreement shall govern.

Outside agencies

A USDA Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination may be filed outside of the district, by completing the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. A letter containing all of the information requested in the form may also be written. The completed complaint form or letter may be sent by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or e-mail at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.