

APPEAL/GRIEVANCE POLICY

Purpose:

The Columbia County Rural Library District (“District”) encourages open communication and recognizes the right of all employees to express differences of opinion and to seek fair and timely resolutions of disputes regarding their employment with the Library District. This policy provides Library employees with a potential option to resolve disputes. All administrative and supervisory personnel should act promptly and objectively within the framework of the policy.

This Appeal/Grievance Policy is not a contract of employment. It is merely a guideline that the District is free to follow or not follow at its sole discretion with or without notice.

Policy:

It is the policy of the District to treat all employees equitably and fairly in matters affecting employment. The District recognizes the rights of all regular, full-time and part-time employees to challenge disciplinary actions and provides employees with a due process for submitting an appeal/grievance. This process is intended to enhance, not replace, communications between an employee and his/her supervisor. It is not intended to preclude use of an “open door” policy, wherein an employee may discuss work-related matters directly with any level of management. Both the grievance process and the traditional “open door” policy are designed to encourage an employee to voice concerns about how the application of District policies or procedures may have affected him/her. Retaliation, in any form, against an employee who makes use of or participates in this process will not be tolerated.

Eligibility

All regular, full-time and part-time employees regardless of the number of hours they work, who have successfully completed their probationary period, are eligible to use the grievance process.

Any non-probationary employee may submit an appeal/grievance contesting:

1. Dismissal, suspension, or any disciplinary action other than a verbal warning.
2. Unfairness, unlawful discrimination, impropriety.
3. Violation or misinterpretation of the library rules or policies.

Definitions

1. **Grievance** – a complaint or problem experienced by an employee pertaining to the terms and conditions of his/her employment, the application of Library policies, the working relationships between an employee and his/her supervisor, or the working relationships between an employee and his/her coworkers.
2. **Retaliation** – any adverse action taken against an employee who exercises his/her rights under this policy.

In all proceedings provided under this appeal/grievance policy, an employee who is party to the proceedings shall have the right to appear personally either with or without legal counsel. If an employee chooses to bring legal counsel, the District will exercise its right to have its legal counsel present at a mutually convenient time for all parties involved.

Information concerning an employee appeal/grievance shall be confidential except to the extent necessary for the parties to fully participate in the appeal/grievance proceedings and further in order to remain in compliance with the Public Records Disclosure Act and other pertinent laws. Copies of all grievance material should be retained in the employee's personnel file.

Any time limits in this policy may be extended by mutual consent, in writing, and the appeal/grievance may be concluded by mutual decision at any step. Termination of an employee on probation is not subject to an appeal, nor is the termination of an employee with limited temporary appointment, nor is the termination of an employee due to a layoff, work force reduction, or job position elimination.

No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with the District in a reasonable, business-like manner, or for submitting an appeal/grievance. All employees of the Library submitting an appeal/grievance must follow the Appeal/Grievance Policy. The employee may discontinue their appeal/grievance at any step.

If a situation occurs when an employee believes that a condition of employment or a decision affecting such employee is subject to this Appeal Grievance Policy, he/she is encouraged to make use of the following steps:

STEP 1:

Aggrieved employees shall first attempt to resolve any differences with each other or their immediate supervisor, or with the implementation or interpretation of policy and procedures on an informal basis. If the problem is not settled to the employee's satisfaction, the employee may proceed to Step 2.

STEP 2:

In order to assure the orderly conduct of business and the handling of any appeal/grievance or dispute, the following shall apply:

The employee shall submit a written appeal/grievance to the following in the order listed:

1. Immediate Supervisor.
2. Library Director.

In those cases when the dispute concerns the actions of an individual in the line of authority, the employee may present his/her grievance to the next higher authority.

The following schedule will be observed for each step of the appeal/grievance:

1. Employee has five (5) working days from the date of the incident in question to file a written complaint detailing the circumstances giving rise to the complaint and the remedy sought.
2. Within five (5) working days of receipt of the written appeal/grievance, the Library Director should communicate in writing to the employee that the appeal/grievance has been received and also provide the employee with a date and time for a meeting to discuss the appeal/grievance. The Library Director, immediate Supervisor, and any other pertinent employees of the District should attend the scheduled meeting.
3. The Library Director should issue a written documentation on the appeal/grievance and recommendation of a possible solution. This report should be made within twenty (20) working days from the date on which the appeal/grievance was received. If the appeal/grievance is still not resolved, the employee may elect to appeal or grieve the issue to the Library Board of Trustees.

HISTORY

Adopted June 11, 2009