

SECTION 504 WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

It is the policy of the SMCPSS not to discriminate on the basis of disability. SMCPSS has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any discrimination prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (20 U.S.C. 794). Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Any person who believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability may file a grievance under this procedure. This grievance procedure is meant to provide a prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint.

A grievance must be in writing and at minimum contain (1) the nature of the grievance; (2) the facts upon which the grievance is based, including a list of all witnesses; (3) the remedy requested; and (4) the complainant's signature and the date the grievance is filed. The written grievance must be filed with the Dr. Jeffrey A. Maher, Chief Strategic Officer, in the SMCPSS Office of Strategic Planning and Communication at the following address:

Dr. Jeffrey A. Maher, Chief Strategic Officer
Office of Strategic Planning and Communication
St. Mary's County Public Schools
23160 Moakley Street
Leonardtown, MD 20650

Grievances must be filed with the Chief Strategic Officer in the SMCPSS' Office of Strategic Planning and Communication as soon as possible, within thirty (30) calendar days of the occurrence, except for extraordinary circumstances.

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Dr. Maher or his designee will conduct an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation of the allegations to determine whether SMCPSS is in compliance with Section 504. The parties will have an opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence, including verbal and written evidence, during the course of the investigation. Dr. Maher or his designee will provide a written report of the investigation within thirty (30) school days of receipt of the grievance. The report should include the following information:

- A statement of the complainant's allegations and the remedy sought;
- A statement of the facts as contended by each party;
- A list of the witnesses interviewed and the documents reviewed during the investigation;
- A statement of the facts as determined by the investigator with reference to the evidence to support each fact;
- The investigator's conclusion as to whether the allegations are valid; and
- If the investigator does determine that the allegations are valid, the report should include any corrective action recommended and/or determined by the

- investigator.
- An assurance and description of the steps to be taken if necessary to prevent the recurrence of the prohibited actions and to correct any discriminatory effects on the complainant and others, if appropriate.

An extension of the thirty (30) school day deadline for the submission of the decision on appeal may apply if necessary as determined by the Dr. Maher or his designee. The parties will be notified in writing of the extended time limit.

The Complainant has the right to file a complaint at any time with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) without going through the SMCPs internal grievance procedures.