



DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES/ CALL CENTER

DISTRICTWIDE COMPLAINT RESPONSE SYSTEM PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

July 2015

The procedures and protocols outlined in this Manual serve as an updated guide to previous versions. A study conducted by the Office of the Independent Monitor, dated April 8, 2013, entitled *“Study of the District’s Compliance and Effectiveness with Section 9, Complaint Response Unit Modified Consent Decree”*, made a series of recommendations, including the following:

- ❖ Establish and implement a uniform intake within the database that collects pertinent information regarding a parent’s inquiry, concern or complaint.
- ❖ Establish protocols for identifying the complaint in relation to an alleged violation of special education law, education code or District policy.
- ❖ Establish a system that categorizes and prioritizes calls in a meaningful way for all parties who receive, investigate and respond to complaints.
- ❖ Establish procedures for determining a lawful response, and an oversight mechanism to ensure letters accurately reflect the action or remedy, cases are closed consistently, that all related persons receive a copy (including schools), and that schools and/or staff are held accountable for implementing the action and/or remedy.
- ❖ Provide pertinent training to all parties involved.

The Division of Special Education, School and Family Support Services has instituted a “Districtwide Complaint Response System” through the Call Center. The three main objectives of the School and Family Support Services’ Call Center, hereinafter “SFSS”, are:

- 1) to assist families with inquiries,
- 2) to assist families with concerns, and
- 3) to give the District an opportunity to resolve parent complaints regarding compliance with special education laws without the need for parents to resort to filing external complaints and/or due process.

Staffing

School and Family Support Services has established a Special Education Districtwide Complaint Response System through its Call Center with clear and rigorous procedures and protocols to facilitate and expedite the resolution of inquiries, concerns and complaints regarding compliance with special education laws and policies. Staffing consists of:

- a) Classified Staff
- b) Certificated Staff
- c) Administrative Staff

As a part of ensuring quality assurance, oversight and most importantly to safeguard that all calls are promptly answered, SFSS has developed a **system for responding to inquiries, concerns and complaints** (referred to as “calls” or “records”). The goal of this system is to find positive, meaningful and lasting resolutions to callers requests for assistance. The Division of Special Education will respond to calls utilizing a Welligent Call Center module. All calls will be responded to in an expedited manner, including calls that come in to the Division of Special Education via the 1-800-933-8133 phone number and the Call Center number (213-241-6701).

Classified staff are the first responders to all calls. Classified staff are not case managers, nor do they determine lawful responses, rather they serve in the capacity of:

- a. Assisting and supporting callers by providing answers to tier one level calls. Tier one level calls are: A) Frequently Asked Questions; B) Information from “A Parent’s Guide to Special Education Services”; or C) Latest information from District Memos, Bulletins, and Reference Guides.
- b. Directing callers to the appropriate District staff for tier two and tier three level calls. Tier two level calls are: A) Complex inquiries; B) Concerns surrounding specific issues; C) Technical issues; D) Sensitive matters. Tier three level calls are higher and more complex tier two calls that require greater knowledge and experience and the attention of a Specialist, including violations of special education regulations.
- c. Recording claims, evidence, and steps taken (by the caller).

Through a series of training modules and ongoing feedback, classified staff receive ongoing training/feedback to differentiate calls that are inquiries, concerns or complaints that are violations of federal and state special education laws and regulations or District policies and procedures. When it is determined by classified staff, with the oversight of Supervisors, that a call is a complaint that fits the definition above, a SFSS Specialist assumes responsibility for the call.

SFSS will train all Division of Special Education classified, certificated and administrative staff to work closely with the Specialist or Program Specialist assigned to complaint cases. The certificated and/or administrative staff is responsible for conducting investigations of alleged violations and drafting lawful response letter to parents.

Dissemination of Information

School and Family Support Services will continue to provide appropriate materials and information to parents and District staff through publications, informational meetings, posters, the Call Center and on the Division of Special Education website for the purpose of informing all stakeholders seeking special education information or assistance. This information will be available to District staff, parents, and community members through the following materials:

- Reference Guide: [Coming Soon !!!](#)
- Special Education School and Family Support Services brochure, distributed annually by direct mailings to schools (with directions to order additional copies)

- Presentations and trainings to parents and community members;
- Special Education School and Family Support Services posters and brochures, distributed annually by direct mailings to schools:
- LAUSD Division of Special Education website;
- Telephone Directory listing.

Receiving and Responding to Inquiries, Concerns and Complaints

The Special Education School and Family Support Services will receive inquiries, concerns and complaints in the form of written communication, via telephone or other means of communication. All inquiries, concerns and complaints will be assigned a case manager and all communication will be logged into Call Center. **The case manager will see each call through to its completion or resolution as well as updating the caller.**

Intake Process: SFSS classified staff are trained to follow an intake procedure for all telephone calls or written communications from parents, schools, teachers, or community members. As part of the intake procedure, SFSS classified staff will document all incoming calls and written communications with clear, accurate and concise reporting to determine if the call or written communication is an inquiry, concern or complaint following our “Claim, Evidence, Steps Taken, Actions to Resolve, and Resolution” Protocol (CESAR). The intake information is entered into the Call Center module with a Low, Medium or High rating utilizing an established system for routing calls.

- An Inquiry is a call (or written form of communication) in which a parent, school, teacher or community member requests basic information about services or rights, but does not involve an allegation of a perceived violation of special education laws and regulations or the District’s Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual.
 - If the call or written communication is determined to be an inquiry-tier one level, the classified staff receiving the call (or reviewing the written communication) will respond and be designated as the person responsible for ensuring;
 - a. the inquiry is responded to by providing the requested information.
 - b. Recording the “resolution” in Welligent
 - c. Closing the record in Welligent



- A concern is a call or written form of communication in which a parent, school, teacher or community member expresses a matter of interest or importance to them. The concern is

not a violation of law or the Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual. However, a response may require the expertise of a Specialist or Program Specialist who will be deemed the case manager. The case manager is charged with responding appropriately to the concerns.

- If the call or written communication is determined to be a concern, the classified staff receiving the call or reviewing the written communication will open a record and assign to a case manager. Case manager is responsible for ensuring the concern is responded to and addressed, logging the details, passing information on to the school or other necessary personnel or departments, then closing the record.

➤ A Complaint as defined in the MCD means an allegation of a perceived violation of:

Federal Law	State Law	District Policy
		
(1) the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and implementing regulations;	(2) the California State Education Code related to special education and implementing regulations;	(3) the District’s Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual

- If the call or written communication is determined to be a complaint as defined above, the classified staff receiving the call or reviewing the written communication will open a record and assign to administrator who will review then assign as appropriate. Case manager is responsible responsible for taking the appropriate action to remedy the perceived violation implementing the following steps:

STEP 1: Thoroughly investigate the complaint. Consult with an Administrator as needed;

STEP 2: Make appropriate contact with District schools and offices to resolve the complaint and generate a Lawful Response Letter as defined below. Consult with Administrator as needed;

STEP 3: Forward a copy of the Lawful Response Letter to complainant and to all involved parties (i.e., school site, applicable related services departments, etc.) within the following performance standards set forth below; and

STEP 4: Upon resolution of the complaint and issuance of a Lawful Response Letter, SFSS LRE Specialist/case manager will log details and close the case in the Welligent Call Center module.

STEP 5: The case manager will follow up with the complainant and District parties to ensure that the resolution was implemented when action was required.

- A Lawful Response as defined in the MCD means that a parent is provided with a written response that satisfied the District’s legal obligations and may be one of the following: (1) a remedy and, where appropriate, the date by which the remedy shall be implemented; (2) information that an appropriate referral has been made; (3) suggested action the complainant may wish to take; or (4) a determination that the complaint has been investigated and determined to be unfounded.
- The District will provide Lawful Responses to parents filing complaints in accordance with the following performance standards:
 - ❖ 25% of complaints will be responded to within 5 working days.
 - ❖ 50% of complaints will be responded to within 10 working days.
 - ❖ 75% of complaints will be responded to within 20 working days.
 - ❖ 90% of complaints will be responded to within 30 working days.



For both, concerns and complaints, Case managers are expected to make contact with callers within 24-business-hours and record progress towards resolving the case at least every 48-business-hours on Welligent until case is considered resolved.

Satisfaction Survey

The District is committed in the implementation and use of the satisfaction survey to be provided to all parties involved in the complaint to receive input regarding the process of responding to and resolving complaints. The surveys will continually be reviewed and analyzed to determine patterns, trends and highlight categories for ongoing SFSS trainings and recommendations to improve the Division of Special Education Districtwide Complaint Response System as well as the management of its procedures and protocols.



Retention of Data

All incoming parent complaints are documented using the Welligent Call Center module under the “notes” Section. Reports will be generated pursuant to the requirements of the Modified Consent Decree which states, “the District will be required to report to the Independent Monitor on the status of each complaint not resolved within 30 working days at 5 working day intervals, until the complaint is resolved.”



Upon request from the Independent Monitor, the Division of Special Education will

disaggregate the number of complaints by Local Districts.

Quality Assurance and Quality Control

As part of the Division of Special Education's quality assurance and quality control processes, SFSS administrative staff will regularly review Welligent Call Center module intake data, observe classified and certificated staff handling inquiry, concern and complaint calls and written communications, as well as reviewing lawful response letters to ensure that the Districtwide Complaint Response System is efficient and effective.

Rev: 7/10/15