

## Dispute Resolution Policy

Arbutus College is committed to resolving disputes swiftly and satisfactorily. This policy outlines our approach to dispute resolution, emphasizing fairness, transparency, and respect for all parties involved. It applies to all students, staff, management, and board members of the College.

### PROCEDURE

Our Dispute Resolution Procedure is designed to ensure that everyone involved has an opportunity to voice their concerns and seek a fair resolution. It encompasses clear guidelines on the roles of the College Director, the Appeals Committee, and the mediation process. We aim to maintain a supportive and safe learning environment for all students.

The following procedure outlines the steps to follow if a student has a complaint or a dispute that cannot be resolved formally.

1. *Policy Accessibility:* On the first day of class, students will receive the Student Handbook, which includes this policy. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with it. The policy is also accessible online and at the College's administration office for future reference.
2. *Initial Complaint Process:*
  - a. *General Complaints:* Students should first bring their complaint to the College Director, either directly or through an intermediary (e.g., teacher, staff member, or another student).
  - b. *Complaints Involving the College Director:* If the complaint involves the College Director, students should direct it to the designated representative of the Appeals Committee.
3. *Documentation and Response:* The College Director or their representative will request a written description of the complaint from the complainant, including any prior attempts at resolution.

This request must occur within two days of the complaint's notification, and the complainant should describe within three days of this request.

4. *Investigation and Meeting:* The College Director will investigate all aspects of the complaint, involving all relevant parties.

A meeting will be scheduled within one week of receiving the written complaint at a location convenient for the complainant(s).

The College Director or a neutral party should facilitate the meeting if the Director is involved in the dispute.

5. *Reporting and Decision Making:* Within one week of the meeting, the College Director will provide a written report to all directly involved parties, detailing the complaint, actions taken, and the decision rationale.

Should the complainant find the resolution unsatisfactory, they must inform the College Director within one week to initiate further action.

6. *Mediation Process:* If resolution through these steps is unsuccessful, or at any stage if requested by the complainant, the College Director or their representative will refer the matter to a professional mediator within three days. The College will bear the cost of mediation.
7. *Ensuring Non-Retaliation and Accessibility:* This policy safeguards against retaliation towards individuals who initiate a complaint. The College ensures the policy is accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.
8. *Post-Mediation Follow-up:* In cases where mediation does not result in a resolution, the matter will be referred back to the College administration for further action, ensuring adherence to the principles of fairness and transparency.
9. *Policy Review:* This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance, with adjustments made as necessary.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Arbutus College is dedicated to resolving disputes in a manner that upholds the dignity and rights of all involved. We believe this policy provides a clear, fair, and effective framework for managing and resolving disputes within our community.

Updated on November 23, 2023