



DISPUTE Resolution



Conflict is a natural part of life.

It can happen with neighbors, family, or work colleagues.

In MCPS, conflicts can occur between two or more employees, an employee and a supervisor, or two supervisors. Most of these conflicts are minor and can be handled by the individuals involved. But sometimes employees and managers need additional help to resolve conflicts and build mutual respect and cooperation.

***That's when mediation
can make all the difference...***

.....
Maryland's Largest School District
.....

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The MCPS Dispute Resolution Program provides a no-cost mediation process for all employees. Created by a unique partnership among MCPS, its three unions (Montgomery County Education Association, Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel, and Service Employees International Union Local 500), and the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County, our mediation program is administered by the MCPS Employee Assistance Program.

It is available to all MCPS employees as part of the school system's commitment to support the development of a strong, effective workforce. The program is appropriate for most workplace disputes between employees. Any two (or more) MCPS employees who wish to resolve a workplace dispute in a collaborative way may request mediation.

MEDIATION IS A FREE, voluntary, and confidential process in which a neutral third person (the mediator) assists individuals on all sides with communicating their concerns, interests, and needs and helps them find solutions to the problem. The mediator does not judge right or wrong and does not make decisions for the parties involved. Mediation has been used successfully in a wide variety of conflicts.

Entering into mediation may feel like a big step, so it is important to know that many people have found the process to be very helpful in resolving relatively small problems, as well as more difficult, long-term issues.

If you have questions that are not answered in this brochure, call the Dispute Resolution Program at the Employee Assistance Program, 240-314-1041.

A video with more information about the Dispute Resolution Program is on the MCPS website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap/mediation.aspx.

A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

Montgomery County Public Schools
Montgomery County Education Association
Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel
Service Employees International Union Local 500
Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County

The **Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County** (CRCMC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing high-quality dispute prevention, resolution, and education to individuals and community organizations.
www.crcmc.org

Mediation services are free of charge to Montgomery County residents.

Here are answers to frequently asked questions about mediation and the Dispute Resolution Program.

Q. What kinds of disputes are addressed?

A. Mediation is appropriate for a wide variety of workplace-related issues and disputes. For example, mediation can help two people who share work space do so fairly and respectfully or help people with different ideas about how to complete a shared project work together effectively as a team. Other examples might be mediating office temperature, noise levels, or personality conflicts. Mediation can be appropriate for situations in which an employee feels unfairly treated by a supervisor or in which a supervisor feels disrespected by an employee.

Q. What can I expect if I decide to call the Dispute Resolution Program for assistance?

A. A staff member of the MCPS Employee Assistance Program will listen to your concern in confidence, determine if the dispute meets program guidelines for mediation, collect your contact information, and, with your permission, forward information to the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County. The Conflict Resolution Center will contact the individuals involved and set up mediation, if both parties agree to mediate.

Q. What is involved in the actual mediation?

A. No two mediations are exactly alike. Most mediations take place in one session that lasts about two hours. Sometimes a second session is needed. During the session, a trained mediator works with the participants to—

- set ground rules,
- gather information,
- identify issues,
- develop and evaluate options for settlement,
- reach agreement, and
- decide on next steps

Q. When are the sessions scheduled?

A. The sessions are scheduled at the convenience of the participants. Release time from work can be provided if necessary.

Q. How can I make sure that my privacy is protected?

A. The program is confidential. Neither the Employee Assistance Program, Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County staff, nor mediators will disclose any information gathered in the process (except as required by law in cases of child abuse, elder abuse, and credible threats of harm to self and others).

WHO leads the mediation session?

Mediators are

- trained facilitators experienced in dispute resolution,
- affiliated with the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County,
- able to provide services in multiple languages and for the hearing impaired.

HOW can I get started?

- **Call the Employee Assistance Program at 240-740-6499** to get the mediation process started.
- Only one participant needs to call. *All information is confidential.*

**Making Our
RESPECT
Compact Real**

- Resolving differences**
- Enhancing collaboration**
- Supporting our coworkers**
- Promoting civility**
- Encouraging creativity**
- Communicating openly**
- Team building through trust**

MCPS NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) prohibits illegal discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family/parental status, marital status, age, physical or mental disability, poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations. Discrimination undermines our community's long-standing efforts to create, foster, and promote equity, inclusion, and acceptance for all. Some examples of discrimination include acts of hate, violence, insensitivity, harassment, bullying, disrespect, or retaliation. For more information, please review Montgomery County Board of Education Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*. This Policy affirms the Board's belief that each and every student matters, and in particular, that educational outcomes should never be predictable by any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics. The Policy also recognizes that equity requires proactive steps to identify and redress implicit biases, practices that have an unjustified disparate impact, and structural and institutional barriers that impede equality of educational or employment opportunities.

For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS staff *	For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS students *
Office of Employee Engagement and Labor Relations Department of Compliance and Investigations 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 55 Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888 OCOO-EmployeeEngagement@mcpsmd.org	Office of the Chief of Staff Student Welfare and Compliance 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 162 Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215 COS-StudentWelfare@mcpsmd.org

**Inquiries, complaints, or requests for accommodations for students with disabilities also may be directed to the supervisor of the Office of Special Education, Resolution and Compliance Unit, at 240-740-3230. Inquiries regarding accommodations or modifications for staff may be directed to the Office of Employee Engagement and Labor Relations, Department of Compliance and Investigations, at 240-740-2888. In addition, discrimination complaints may be filed with other agencies, such as: the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Baltimore Field Office, City Crescent Bldg., 10 S. Howard Street, Third Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201, 1-800-669-4000, 1-800-669-6820 (TTY); or U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Lyndon Baines Johnson Dept. of Education Bldg., 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100, 1-800-421-3481, 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), OCR@ed.gov, or www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html.*

This document is available, upon request, in languages other than English and in an alternate format under the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, by contacting the MCPS Office of Communications at 240-740-2837, 1-800-735-2258 (Maryland Relay), or PIO@mcpsmd.org. Individuals who need sign language interpretation or cued speech transliteration may contact the MCPS Office of Interpreting Services at 240-740-1800, 301-637-2958 (VP) or MCPSInterpretingServices@mcpsmd.org. MCPS also provides equal access to the Boy/Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups.

