



## **MDCPS Policy:**

# **Formal Grievances by MDCPS Licensed Foster Parents and Relative Care Providers**



- A. A formal grievance is a formal statement of complaint for an alleged wrong or hardship suffered which may be filed by a person who provides foster care or relative care.
- B. MDCPS licensed foster parents and those providing relative care may file a formal grievance under this procedure to raise complaints or concerns regarding the rights afforded under the Foster Parents' Bill of Rights or the responsibilities of foster parents under Mississippi Code Section 43-15-13.<sup>1</sup> **A formal grievance may not be filed for a decision made pursuant to an order of a court.**
- C. A formal grievance may be filed by filling out Section I of the Foster Parent Grievance Form. The form is located on MDCPS's website ([mdcps.ms.gov](http://mdcps.ms.gov)) in an online version and a printable PDF version. The online version will be automatically filed once completed. The printable version must be filed via email at [FPgrievance@mdcps.ms.gov](mailto:FPgrievance@mdcps.ms.gov). An MDCPS representative will make contact with the foster parent once the grievance has been reviewed.
- D. MDCPS's Foster Parent Grievance Procedure consists of a three-level review system.
  - 1. **Level One:**
    - A. Foster parent grievances will be reviewed by the appropriate Service Area or Licensure Manager. Grievances regarding safety or wellbeing issues or staff will be reviewed by a Service Area Manager, and grievances regarding licensure issues or staff will be reviewed by a Licensure Manager.
    - B. The Service Area or Licensure Manager will contact the foster parent once he or she acts on the grievance. The Service Area or Licensure Manager will also describe the actions taken in Section II of the Foster Parent Grievance Form and a copy of the form will be sent to the foster parent via DocuSign.
    - C. The foster parent must sign Section II of the formal grievance form and check the box that states whether the action(s) taken resolve the grievance or whether further review is requested. This step must be completed within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the form.
    - D. **Failure to sign, return, and request further review within 30 calendar days will be considered a voluntary waiver of your right to a Level Two review.**

2. **Level Two:**

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<sup>1</sup> Mississippi Code Section 43-15-13(11) and (12) set forth the rights afforded to foster parents and the basic responsibilities of foster parents.



- A. A level two review will be provided to foster parents who timely request further review of their grievance.
- B. The appropriate Assistant Deputy Commissioner (ADC) or Licensure Unit Director will conduct a level-two review. Grievances regarding safety or wellbeing issues or staff will be reviewed by an ADC, and grievances regarding licensure issues or staff will be reviewed by a Licensure Unit Director.
- C. The ADC or Licensure Unit Director will contact the foster parent once he or she acts on the grievance. The ADC or Licensure Unit Director will also describe the actions taken in Section III of the Foster Parent Grievance Form and a copy of the form will be sent to the foster parent via DocuSign.
- D. The foster parent must sign Section III of the formal grievance form and check the box that indicates whether the action(s) taken resolve the grievance or whether further review is requested. This step must be completed within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the form.
- E. **Failure to sign, return, and request further review within 30 calendar days will be considered a voluntary waiver of your right to a Level Three review.**

3. **Level Three:**

- A. A level three review will be provided to foster parents who timely request further review of their grievance.
- B. The appropriate Deputy Commissioner or his/her designee will conduct a level three review. The Deputy Commissioner will also consult the Office of Legal Counsel before making a final decision.
- C. The Deputy Commissioner or designee will fill out Section IV of the Foster Parent Grievance Form and send it to the foster parent via DocuSign. The final determination and any other actions taken to resolve the grievance will be documented on the form.
- D. The foster parent should acknowledge receipt of the completed form by signing it and returning it via DocuSign.
- E. **Decisions made by the Deputy Commissioner or his/her designee are final, and no further review will be granted.**