



## **Policy and Procedure for Complaints against Affiliated Institutions**

Independent schools accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges are expected to operate in the public interest and in accordance with recognized ethical and legal practices.

The Commission on Independent Schools occasionally receives requests to investigate member institutions' alleged injustices to individuals. Its attitude toward such requests depends upon the nature of the charges and the evidence offered. Only substantially supported allegations of practices that could seriously impair the quality and effectiveness of an institution's program and are in conflict with the standards of the Association can be considered by the Commission, and then only as a basis for further inquiry. The Commission will not intervene on behalf of individuals.

If the alleged circumstances do appear to be of the nature above described, the Commission may conduct a confidential inquiry with the knowledge of and in conference with those concerned. Findings will be reported to the Commission for its consideration. Should the Commission's deliberations lead to a recommendation for a change of the institution's status with the Association, the institution has available the appeals procedure established and published by the Association.

In the event that a complainant has instituted litigation against the institution, no action will be taken on the complaint while the matter is under judicial consideration.

### **Reviewing Complaints**

1. A complaint received by the Commission will be acknowledged in writing and initially reviewed by the Director of the Commission.
2. If the Director finds the complaint to be outside of the scope of the policies of the Commission, the complainant will be so informed. This decision may be appealed, in writing, directly to the Commission.
3. If the complaint appears to be within the scope of policies of the Commission, a copy of the complaint will be forwarded to the chief administrative officer of the institution who will be asked to respond to the complaint.
4. The Director of the Commission will review the response from the institution and recommend to the Commission that (a) the matter be closed, or (b) the complaint should be investigated further, or (c) the complaint should be referred to a special Commission committee for consideration.
5. After appropriate steps are taken, a report will be submitted to the Commission at a regular meeting or the Commission Chair may call a special meeting. The complainant will be informed of steps taken by the Commission including any action taken by that body.