

WILC Policy on Management and Leadership Involvement in Legal Proceedings

1. Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines for the involvement of management and leadership in legal proceedings related to the organization, its board, staff, learners, or affiliated parties. It aims to ensure legal compliance while maintaining organizational neutrality, minimizing bias, and protecting the integrity of the school and community.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Board members
- Executive leadership (e.g., Executive Director, Program Directors)
- Management and supervisory staff
- Employees, contractors. And volunteers acting in an official capacity.

3. Guiding Principles

- **Neutrality:** The organization maintains a neutral stance in legal disputes unless legally required to participate.
- **Minimized Involvement:** Leadership participation is limited to what is legally necessary.
- **Avoidance of Bias:** Leadership avoids actions that could influence outcomes or create perceived favoritism.
- **Compliance:** The organization complies fully with lawful orders, subpoenas, and regulatory obligations.
- **Protection of Community Trust:** Actions should preserve the trust of learners, families, staff, and stakeholders.

4. Permitted Involvement

Management and leadership may be involved in legal proceedings only under the following circumstances:

4.1 Legally Required Participation

- Responding to subpoenas, court orders, or official legal inquiries
- Providing factual documentation or records as required by law

- Participating in depositions or testimony when legally compelled

4.2 Limited Voluntary Participation

- Serving as a **character witness**, provided:
 - Must be done via written statement and reviewed by the Board of Directors and/or WILC legal council, unless legally required to attend in person.
 - Testimony is factual and within the individual's direct knowledge.
 - Participation does not conflict with organizational interests.
 - Prior approval is obtained from the Executive Director or Board Chair

5. Prohibited or Restricted Involvement

Management and leadership **must not**:

- Function as advocates for any party in a legal dispute involving the organization.
- Provide legal advice unless qualified and authorized to do so.
- Engage in informal mediation or dispute resolution related to active legal cases.
- Use organizational authority, resources, or influence to affect legal outcomes.
- Publicly comment on ongoing legal matters without authorization

6. Internal Reporting and Approval

- Any request for leadership involvement in legal proceedings must be reported immediately to the Board of Directors designated compliance officer.
- Board members must notify the Board Chair
- Legal counsel (if retained) should be consulted before any participation beyond mandatory compliance.

7. Documentation and Recordkeeping

- All legal requests and responses must be documented.
- Copies of subpoenas, correspondence, and submitted materials must be securely retained.
- Participation as a witness must be recorded, including the scope and nature of testimony.

8. Confidentiality

- All staff and leadership must maintain confidentiality regarding legal matters.

- Sensitive learner, personnel, and organizational information must only be disclosed when legally required.
- Compliance with applicable privacy laws (e.g., FERPA or equivalent) is mandatory.

9. Communication Protocol

- Only designated individuals (e.g., Executive Director or Board Chair) may speak on behalf of the organization.
- Internal communication should be limited to those with a need to know.
- External inquiries (media, community, etc.) must be referred to authorized leadership.

10. Conflict of Interest

- Individuals involved in legal matters personally must disclose conflicts immediately.
- They must recuse themselves from any organizational decisions related to the matter.

11. Non-Retaliation

The organization prohibits retaliation against any individual involved in legal proceedings, whether as a party, witness, or reporting individual.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and updated as needed to ensure legal compliance and alignment with organizational values.