

## WHEN CAN YOU CONTACT THE OMBUDS OFFICE?

- When you need someone to listen
- When you don't know where to go to obtain information or to discuss a question, issue, or concern
- When you need help to understand a policy or procedure
- When you need assistance in how to navigate a system or process
- When you are trying to identify programs or resources available to you or your student
- When you have been unable to resolve an issue or concern with the appropriate teacher, staff member, or administrator
- When you think that you or your student has been treated unfairly or that a policy has been violated or applied unfairly



## HOW DO YOU VISIT AND COMMUNICATE WITH THE OMBUDS OFFICE?

To visit the Ombuds Office, you need to make an appointment. To make an appointment, you may contact the office at

- **(512) 414-9600**
- **[ombuds@austinisd.org](mailto:ombuds@austinisd.org)**
- **[www.austinisd.org/ombuds-office](http://www.austinisd.org/ombuds-office)**

To protect confidentiality, the Ombuds Office strongly recommends discussing issues and concerns in person, via secure videoconference, or by phone. You are encouraged to avoid using email to communicate sensitive or confidential information, as email is not a secure form of communication. The Ombuds Office does not record any conversations, and we kindly ask you not to record any conversations with the Ombuds Office.



**Scan to request an appointment**



**Austin Independent School District  
Ombuds Office**  
Brooke Elementary School  
3100 E. 4th St.  
Austin, TX 78702

## WHAT IS AN OMBUDS?

The word *ombuds* (AHM buhdz) comes from a Swedish term that means “representative.” At Austin ISD, the Ombuds Office is a safe and confidential space for students, families, and community members to ask questions, share concerns, and seek informal assistance in resolving issues related to Austin ISD. The Ombuds Office also identifies systemic concerns and makes recommendations to leadership to promote equity and improve the culture and climate of Austin ISD.

## WHAT PRINCIPLES GUIDE THE WORK OF THE OMBUDS OFFICE?

In alignment with the [Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics of the International Ombuds Association](#) (IOA), the Ombuds Office abides by the fundamental principles of

- **Confidentiality\***
- **Informality**
- **Impartiality**
- **Independence**

\*Exceptions to confidentiality occur when the Ombuds Office suspects child or elder abuse or neglect, potential violation of [Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972](#), or imminent threat of serious harm (such as serious bodily injury or death).

## WHAT DOES THE OMBUDS OFFICE DO?

- Provides students, families, and community members with a confidential, informal, impartial, and independent resource to discuss questions, issues, and concerns about Austin ISD
- Helps individuals clarify concerns and explore options for resolution
- Explains policies and procedures
- Provides referrals to internal and external resources
- Coaches individuals on how to navigate systems and processes
- Facilitates direct or indirect communication between individuals, when given explicit permission to do so
- Advocates for fair and equitable processes
- Identifies trends and systemic concerns
- Recommends improvements to policies, procedures, services, and systems



## WHAT DOESN'T THE OMBUDS OFFICE DO?

- Take sides or advocate for individuals or for the district
- Direct individuals or the district to take specific actions
- Provide legal, medical, or psychological advice
- Receive formal notice of claims against the district, except as specifically mandated by law
- Conduct formal investigations, determine the outcome of a concern or conflict, or take corrective action
- Participate in internal or external formal or legal proceedings
- Establish, implement, modify, or enforce policies, regulations, or procedures