

Grievance Procedures

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1.About this procedure

It is our policy to ensure that all employees have access to a procedure to help deal with any grievances relating to their employment fairly and without unreasonable delay. We aim to investigate any formal grievance you raise, hold a meeting to discuss it with you, inform you in writing of the outcome, and give you a right of appeal if you are not satisfied.

The procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors. This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2.Using this procedure

Issues that could cause grievances may include:

- terms and conditions of employment;
- health and safety;
- work relations;
- bullying and harassment;
- new working practices;
- working environment;
- organisational change; and
- discrimination.

This procedure should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. If you are dissatisfied with any disciplinary action, you should submit an appeal under the appropriate procedure.

We operate a separate Whistleblowing Policy to enable employees to report illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice. However, where you are directly affected by the matter in question, or where you feel you have been victimised for an act of whistleblowing, you may raise the matter under this procedure.

Written grievances will be placed on your personnel file along with a record of any decisions taken and any notes or other documents compiled during the grievance process. These will be processed lawfully in accordance with Data Protection principles.

3.Raising grievances informally

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with your Line Manager or Headteacher. If you feel unable to speak to your Line Manager/Headteacher, for example, because the complaint concerns him or her, then you should speak informally to the Chief Executive Officer or their deputy.

If informal discussions do not resolve the issue, you should follow the formal procedure below.

4.Formal grievance procedure

If your grievance cannot be resolved informally, you should put it in writing and submit it to your Line Manager or Headteacher, indicating that it is a formal grievance. If the grievance concerns your Line Manager or Headteacher, you may submit it to the Chief Executive Officer or their deputy.

The written grievance should contain a brief description of the nature of your complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved. In some situations we may ask you to provide further information.

4.1 Grievance investigations

It may be necessary to carry out an investigation into your grievance. The investigation may be initiated before holding the grievance meeting with you where appropriate. In other cases the grievance meeting may be held first before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out.

If an investigation is necessary, the amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. The investigation may involve interviewing and taking statements from you and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. You must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending interviews, as part of our investigation.

An investigation may be carried out either by the person appointed to conduct your grievance meeting and determine your grievance or by someone else appointed by the Trust.

4.2 Right to be accompanied

You may bring a companion to any grievance meeting or appeal under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague. You must tell us who your chosen companion is, in good time before the hearing.

A companion is allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay but no-one is obliged to act as a companion if they do not wish to do so.

If your companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, we may ask you to choose someone else.

4.3 Grievance meetings

We will arrange a grievance meeting with you, normally within 15 working days of receiving your grievance. The purpose of a grievance meeting is to enable you to explain your grievance and how you think it should be resolved, and to assist us to reach a decision based on the available evidence and the representations you have made.

The grievance meeting may be conducted by your Line Manager or Headteacher. If the complaint concerns your Line Manager or Headteacher, the hearing may be conducted instead by the Chief Executive Officer or other appropriate appointed person.

You and your companion (if any) should make every effort to attend grievance meetings. If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified, you should inform us immediately and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

4.4 Grievance outcome

Following your grievance meeting/s and any investigation carried out, the person appointed to determine the outcome of your grievance will write to you to inform you of the outcome of your grievance and if appropriate any further action that the Trust intends to take to resolve the grievance, and we will remind you of your right of appeal.

Where appropriate we may hold a further meeting to give you this information in person.

5. Appeals

If the grievance has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing in the first instance to the HR Department within 10 working days of the grievance decision you are appealing against, setting out the grounds for and basis of the appeal in writing.

We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within 15 working days of receiving your written appeal. Grievance appeals will usually be heard by a member of the senior leadership group or otherwise a member of management more senior than the person who heard the grievance or otherwise a panel of three members of the Trust Board of Directors.

You may be accompanied by an appropriate work colleague or an accredited trade union official at any grievance appeal hearing (see above).

No decisions will be made during the appeal hearing itself. The panel may consider it necessary to carry out further investigations before reaching any decisions.

The panel will confirm its final decision in writing without unreasonable delay. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.