

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1 Introduction

- 1.1 There are a number of issues that can cause grievances at work and these may include working conditions, application or non-application of policies and procedures, environment, relationships with management or colleagues, duties and responsibilities, or work volume. Grievances may relate to discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. The aim of this procedure is to enable any employee to have his/her grievance heard and to seek redress as appropriate. The intention is that grievances should be settled quickly and fairly and should be first dealt with as close to the source as possible.

2 General Principles

- 2.1 This procedure deals only with complaints and allegations of discrimination or victimisation from staff we employ directly.
- 2.2 There are separate procedures to deal with disciplinary and capability issues, and allegations of harassment. These are set out in our Staff Disciplinary Procedure, Capability Procedure and Harassment Procedure respectively.
- 2.3 Where the grievance relates to a matter covered by another procedure then the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant procedure. This grievance procedure may not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. An employee who is dissatisfied with any formal warning should submit an appeal under the appropriate procedure.
- 2.4 Where an employee raises a grievance during any existing process or procedure that process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. However, where the grievance and the existing process are related, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently. The Governing Body will have discretion to decide which option is appropriate, in all circumstances.
- 2.5 The procedure applies to all employees including the Principal and members of the Executive Team, full and part-time, permanent and temporary employees. If it is the Principal who has a grievance then the Chair of Governors is the person to whom the Principal refers to as his/her immediate line manager at Stage 2. If the Principal's grievance is not resolved at that stage, the matter should be referred to Stage 3. If individual governors are the subject of the grievance, such person(s) shall not sit with the Appeal Committee but may attend the Governors' Appeal Meeting to present his/her case.
- 2.6 This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.
- 2.7 An employee who is a member of a trade union may consult that trade union's representative before invoking the grievance procedure, but the employee should normally raise the problem personally with the immediate line manager before involving his/her trade union representative.

- 2.8 Those responsible for dealing with employees' grievances will treat them seriously and attempt to resolve them as quickly as possible. There should be no attempt to block an employee's wish to raise the grievance at a higher level.
- 2.9 Employees should recognise that an investigation may be necessary which may delay the process beyond normal time limits.
- 2.10 At any stage of the procedure the Principal and/or Governors may refer to an adviser external to the school for guidance to bring about a resolution of the grievance acceptable to both sides outside the formal procedure. Such conciliation is without prejudice to the position of both parties in the procedure.
- 2.11 The Principal and/or senior managers and/or Governors may wish to take advice from an external adviser before considering a grievance.

3 Stages of the Grievance Procedure

3.1 Stage 1: Raising Grievances Informally

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion. If an employee feels unable to speak to the person causing the grievance, then the employee should speak informally to his/her immediate line manager.

In all circumstances, even where the complainant submits a grievance under the formal procedure without first raising the complaint with their line manager, managers should try to resolve the underlying problem informally as part of good management practice and not rely upon a formal procedure.

If this does not resolve the issue, the employee should follow the formal procedure below.

If the employee's grievance is against the line manager personally, the grievance may be referred directly to Stage 2 but it would normally be reasonable to inform the line manager of this intention.

3.2 Stage 2: Formal Grievances

If the employee is not satisfied his/her concerns have been addressed informally, the employee should submit the grievance in writing, indicating that it is a formal grievance, to the Principal. The Employee should use the Notification of Grievance Form (Appendix A) to state the grounds of their grievance and the remedy that is being sought.

A formal grievance should normally be submitted no later than 25 working days after the act or omission complained of, or no later than 25 working days after the last act or omission in a series of linked events, unless there is a good reason for the delay.

The Principal will normally meet the employee to hear the grievance and reply as soon as possible, normally within 10 working days, even if it is only an interim reply pending further investigation. The Principal may be accompanied by another employee, or an adviser.

An employee may bring a companion to any formal grievance meeting or appeal meeting under this Stage 2. An employee must tell the person holding the meeting who their chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting.

At any grievance meeting or appeal meeting, an employee's companion may make representations and ask questions, but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf.

If an employee's chosen Companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, the employee will normally be required to find an alternative companion.

It may be necessary to carry out an investigation into the grievance. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the complaints and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the employee, any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents.

The employee must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing those handling the investigation of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents and attending interviews.

An investigation may be started before a grievance meeting is held where this is considered appropriate. In other cases a grievance meeting may be held before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. If appropriate and/or necessary, in those cases a further grievance meeting may be held with the employee after the investigation and before a decision is reached.

The Principal will write to the employee, following the grievance meeting, to inform the employee of the outcome of the grievance and any further action that will be taken to resolve it.

If the employee raising the grievance is not satisfied with the outcome then the employee may appeal in accordance with Stage 3 below.

3.3 Stage 3: Grievance Appeal

If the grievance has not been resolved to the employee's satisfaction they may appeal in writing, to the Clerk of Governors, setting out the grounds of their appeal, within 5 working days of receiving the written confirmation of the original decision. The employee must detail how they consider the grievance procedure has not been correctly applied, and/or how the outcome was not reasonable or proportionate.

The appeal will normally be heard as soon as possible after receipt of the appeal letter, by an Appeal Committee of one or more governors, convened by the Clerk to Governors.

The Appeal Committee may have an external adviser attend the meeting who may also be involved in its private deliberations. The adviser, who should not

have had any previous involvement in dealing with the grievance, shall not have a vote in the decision of the Appeal Committee.

The Appeal Committee will confirm its final decision in writing, as soon as reasonably possible after the appeal meeting. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further right of appeal

4 Record keeping

- 4.1 It is important that accurate and contemporaneous records are kept throughout the process, including any initial informal process.
- 4.2 Records should be held in a secure and confidential manner.

5 Other Associated Policies

- 5.1 This policy is associated with the following:
 - i. Staff Disciplinary Procedure
 - ii. Capability Procedure
 - iii. Harassment Procedure

6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 6.1 The policy will be promoted and published throughout the Academy.
- 6.2 The Governing Body will review it within two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Appendix A

Employee's Notification of Grievance

This form should be used to submit a grievance in accordance with Stage 2 of the formal Grievance Procedure, adopted by the Governing Body.

Send the completed Employee's Notification of Grievance Form (Appendix A) to your Line Manager. If your grievance relates to your Line Manager, send it to the Principal. If your grievance relates to your Principal then send it to the Chair of Governors (or other Governor if the grievance is against the Chair).

You are advised to keep a copy. Please be aware that the information will, in normal circumstances, be shared with any person/s complained about. Please think carefully about what you write.

Name of Complainant: _____

Post held: _____

Describe briefly:

The nature of your grievance. Please include all relevant facts, dates and names of people involved and any witnesses. (continue on a separate page if necessary)

When did you first raise your grievance, and with whom? Is this a one-off issue or part of a chain of events?

What action has been taken on your grievance at the informal stage (Stage 1)?

