



## **Grievance Policy**

### **Introduction**

The School promotes an atmosphere of good day to day communication where employees feel supported and able to resolve issues informally with ease. The School recognises there may be times when issues need to be raised in a formal manner and this policy provides guidance on how formal issues should be raised, will be addressed and investigated objectively and consistently.

It may not always be possible to solve all problems to everyone's satisfaction, but the School wants to ensure that issues are dealt with in an atmosphere of trust and collaboration, and that employees can be confident that their problems will be dealt with fairly, consistently and in confidence, unless agreed otherwise.

The School will aim to comply with the ACAS Code of Practice when dealing with grievance matters.

Please note this grievance policy is entirely non-contractual and does not form part of an employee's contract of employment.

The School is committed to its obligations under General Data Protection Regulations and will ensure compliance when processing personal data.

### **Scope**

This School grievance procedure enables employees to formally raise complaints and concerns for issues that may relate to, but are not limited to:

- health and safety
- work relationships
- the working environment
- organisational change
- treatment from other individuals at work
- treatment from the School
- any concerns relating to harassment, bullying and victimisation
- where a member of staff feels that they have been unfairly or unreasonably treated

The aim of the procedure is to:

- obtain a resolution without delay
- ensure that the School's standards are adhered
- provide a fair method for dealing with any alleged complaints

In accordance with the School's grievance policy, this procedure will be used by the Deputy Head when investigating formal grievances / complaints.

## **Process**

### **1 Informal Procedure**

Staff are encouraged to raise minor grievances and complaints informally with the Deputy Head. It is important to recognise that many problems and difficulties can be, and should be, resolved without recourse to formal procedures.

The formal procedure is intended to be used for problems, which are serious in themselves or serious because they remain unresolved after informal processes have not achieved a satisfactory solution.

Where concerns are raised, any investigation carried out should also explore possible underlying factors.

The employee should be informed that if the complaint / grievance remains after the informal process, they have the option to raise them formally.

The Deputy Head will retain diary notes and a record of discussions, and these will remain on file in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

### **2 Formal Procedure**

Where the grievance / complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis or in the first instance is found to be of a serious nature, the following formal grievance process should be adopted.

The procedure is as follows:

#### **Step 1 - Lodging a grievance**

- The complaint should be put in writing or raised verbally with the Deputy Head, giving as much detail as possible of:
  - incidents
  - dates and times
  - names of any witnesses etc.
  - what outcome the employee hopes for
- The written / verbal grievance should initially be lodged with the Deputy Head. If the employee has sought to deal with the issue informally with the Deputy Head and the situation has not been resolved then they should approach the Head Teacher. For the avoidance of doubt it is advisable to state that you wish to raise a formal grievance under the terms of the procedure.

#### **Step 2 - Grievance meeting**

- The employee will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance.
- The employee has the right of accompaniment by a trade union official or a fellow employee of their choice.
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- At the meeting the employee will be permitted to explain their grievance and how they think

it should be resolved.

- The Deputy Head holding the meeting should either take minutes or arrange for someone who is not involved in the grievance to attend to take minutes.
- The meeting may be concluded on the day / adjourned for a future date in case an investigation is required.

### Step 3 – Investigation

- Following the meeting it may be necessary for the School to investigate the issues that have been raised. If the grievance relates to a colleague then they will be interviewed along with any possible witnesses.
- Confidentiality is very important when dealing with all cases as experience shows that they become much more difficult to resolve informally if information about the matter becomes common knowledge. Where witnesses may need to be given details of the grievances, they must not disclose any details, including once the case has concluded. Witnesses will be asked to confirm their statement which may be shared with relevant parties.

### Step 4 – Outcome

- The School will inform the employee in writing of their decision as soon as possible. The employee will be given a copy of the minutes from the grievance meeting together with minutes from any other meetings that formed part of the investigation along with copies of any other relevant information. In certain circumstances it may be necessary for the School to withhold certain information (possibly to protect an employee).
- The School will notify the employee of their rights to appeal against that decision if the employee is not satisfied with it.
- If the employee does not wish to appeal the grievance will be considered closed.

### Step 5 - Hearing the appeal

- If the employee wants to appeal, they should do this within 5 days upon receipt of the grievance outcome letter which will provide details of to whom the appeal should be sent.
- The appeal, where possible, should be heard by the Head Teacher or a Governor who has not been involved in the initial grievance meeting.
- In the letter the employee should set out their grounds of appeal.
- The employee will be invited to attend a further meeting and has the right to be accompanied by a trade union official or a fellow employee of their choice.
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- The employee will be informed of the final decision in writing.

If the complaint is upheld, the matter will be passed to the Governors to take further action (if required).

Records of grievance hearings shall be retained and kept confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. All paperwork shall be stored securely.

The School may also suggest intervention by a third party mediator as a way of satisfactorily resolving the matter.

If an employee raising a grievance wishes to remain anonymous, it may not be possible to take any action against the person causing offence. It may, however, be possible to address a complaint through indirect methods, such as publicising and drawing attention to this policy, and through training initiatives.

If the complaint relates to a disciplinary, performance or dismissal decision, the employee should appeal against the decision in accordance with the appeal procedure with which they have been provided and not invoke the grievance procedure.

Any breach of confidentiality by the complainant, the individual against whom the grievance has been raised, or witnesses, relating to this policy, will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

Where a complaint is blatantly untrue and has been brought out of spite, or for some other unacceptable motive, the complainant will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedure, as will any witnesses who have deliberately misled the investigations.

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