


# Grievance Procedure Policy

23 October 2026

## About This Document

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# 1. Objective and Scope

1.1. The aim of this procedure is to achieve fair and equitable treatment for all employees of the school in relation to the management of grievances in the workplace.

1.2. The procedure applies to all employees of the school. This procedure does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

1.3. Whilst this procedure recommends that employees submit a written notice of grievance in order to have the matter dealt with formally, (see appendix 1), a grievance can be expressed in other ways, such as face to face discussion or complaint, resignation letter or exit interview. It is important to deal with any potential grievances without delay.

1.4. All parties need to understand that the outcomes of a grievance procedure may need to be justified before an employment tribunal or court. Decisions in the public courts have determined that a written complaint that falls within the scope of a grievance procedure should be dealt with using the grievance procedure, even where the complaint is not presented on any recommended Notice of Grievance.

1.5. The procedure may be used for grievances:

i. between colleagues where there is no line management relationship.

ii. between an employee and management including the Headteacher, Governor or Trustee.

1.6. The procedure may be used for concerns relating to the employee's own work, contract of employment or working relationships with colleagues.

1.7. **The procedure may not be used for grievances regarding:**

i. disciplinary action.

ii. termination of employment.

iii. National Insurance, Income Tax, or pensions.

iv. Pay.

v. performance capability/performance appraisal or,

vi. harassment and bullying.

1.8. All of which are covered by separate procedures.

1.9. An employee cannot raise a grievance on the same grounds they have cited in an earlier appeal heard under any other policy. The Grievance Policy cannot be used to lodge a complaint about the outcome of any other formal procedure which has its own appeal process.

# 2. Principles

2.1. The grievance procedure is designed to help school Governing Bodies, Headteachers, and staff resolve individual or collective grievances by:

i. affording the employee, the opportunity of putting his/her case forward should they have a complaint which they are unable to resolve through regular communication with their Headteacher.

ii. fostering good relationships between school management and staff by encouraging the speedy and effective resolution of grievances

iii. resolving grievances as near as possible to their point of origin in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality.

2.2. This procedure should be freely accessible to all staff, and a copy should be given to the parties at the outset of the formal stages.

2.3. The time limits in the procedure should be adhered to whenever possible, though they may be altered to meet particular circumstances by agreement between the parties.

2.4. Reasonable consideration will be given to facilitating adjustments required in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, for example allowing an interpreter at a formal meeting.

# 3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. By their nature, grievances are internal matters and may involve a number of people. It is not possible, nor desirable, given the emphasis upon dealing informally with grievances, to prescribe specific roles. However, the following broad guidelines may be helpful.

3.2. The Headteacher:

i. The Headteacher, who may or may not be the subject of the grievance, will have a crucial role, together with the line-manager where appropriate, in achieving a resolution of the grievance at the Informal Stage.

3.3. Chair of Governors or Trustees:

i. If a Governor is approached about a grievance, they should refer it without detailed discussion to the Chair of Governors or Trustees, who will arrange a meeting under the formal stage, if it appears that all opportunities to resolve the matter informally have been exhausted.

ii. Where the Headteacher is the subject of the grievance, the Chair of Governors or Trustees assumes the responsibilities of the Headteacher in arranging for the grievance to be considered.

3.4. Other Governors:

i. For reasons stated above, it is not appropriate for other Governors to be involved in detailed discussion of the substance of a grievance (unless, of course, they are themselves the subject of the grievance), because they may be needed for the formal meeting or appeal.

# 4. Expert Advice

4.1. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors or Trustees may need to seek expert advice, either at the informal stage or at formal hearings.

4.2. Guidance for Participants

i. Appendix 2 sets out guidance for the Headteacher and Governors about conducting grievance meetings.

ii. Appendix 3 sets out guidance for employees about how to raise a grievance.

# 5. Right to be Accompanied

5.1. An employee has the right to be accompanied and supported, at any formal stage of the procedure, by a work colleague and no-one else.

5.2. The work colleague may:

i. assist the employee in preparing their case.

ii. confer with the employee before and after the hearing.

iii. present and sum up the employee's case, as agreed with the employee.

iv. address the hearing and ask appropriate questions, as agreed with the employee.

v. respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed at the hearing and,

vi. ask for adjournment if necessary.

5.3. The work colleague is not permitted to:

i. answer questions on behalf of the employee.

ii. address the hearing if the employee indicates that he/she does not wish the work colleague to do so.

iii. prevent the school from explaining the case.

iv. prevent any other person at the hearing from making his/her contribution.

5.4. The employee should give advance notice if they wish to be accompanied, and by whom. If the work colleague is unavailable at the time of the hearing, the employee should contact the individual organising the hearing to rearrange (once) to a time that is mutually convenient. Any postponement should not normally extend beyond 5 working days.

5.5. An employee will not be subjected to a detriment by the school by reason of having acted as a companion in grievance proceedings.

# 6. Stages in the Grievance Procedure

6.1. Informal Stage:

i. If an employee has a grievance that involves another member(s) of staff, they should first endeavour to resolve the matter informally by approaching the person(s) involved and, if necessary, request the involvement of the Headteacher. This allows for problems to be resolved quickly and normal working relationships to resume.

ii. Employees should be able to demonstrate that they have made every effort to discuss the issue(s) informally before the formal process is commenced. It is acknowledged however that there may be occasions where employees may not feel able to follow this route, in such circumstances dialogue with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors or Trustees where appropriate is recommended to discuss the concern(s).

iii. Grievances concerning issues that are more than 3 months old will not be investigated unless there are exceptional circumstances.

6.2. Mediation:

i. During the informal stage, it may be appropriate to explore the use of mediation, depending on the nature of the grievance. This will involve the appointment of a third-party mediator who should be considered impartial by both parties.

6.3. Formal Stages:

i. Any reference to the Hearing Manager relates to the person conducting the meeting/hearing (i.e., the Headteacher/Chair).

6.4. Formal Grievance meeting:

i. Where an employee's grievance remains unresolved, they should submit a written notice of grievance form (see appendix 1) to the Headteacher or, if the Headteacher is the subject of the grievance, the Chair of Governors or Trustees. A formal grievance meeting should not take place unless the employee has submitted their grievance in writing, clearly stating the nature of their grievance.

ii. When submitting a grievance, the employee should give as much detail as possible, including what outcome they are looking for. Evidence that the informal stage has been undertaken should also be submitted at this stage. Where this has not happened, the aggrieved party should explain clearly why they did not feel able to go through the informal stage.

iii. Any formal meeting should be arranged without unreasonable delay. If there is a substantial delay, the reason for this should be communicated to the employee. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague.

iv. The person hearing the grievance or chairing the panel should ensure that a note-taker attends the hearing to record the main points and actions.

v. Where an employee has a grievance with a Governor that does not involve any other member of staff, they should discuss the matter with the Headteacher before making an approach to the Chair of Governors.

vi. It is important that all grievances are considered fairly. It is important that all parties have advance access to any written statement or evidence to be used at the grievance meeting. This should be in sufficient time (5 working days) to enable full consideration of the material. Both parties have the right to be accompanied as specified in this policy.

vii. Separate meetings with each of the parties involved may be held if this is deemed more appropriate. The Hearing Manager considering the grievance will decide (in conjunction with the employee) who should be present at any meeting.

6.5. Witnesses

i. A 'witness' is someone who is neither the subject of the grievance nor raising their own grievance but can provide an account of the matters directly relating to the grievance.

ii. There may be a need to investigate one or more elements of a grievance, which could necessitate the appointment of an investigator by the person hearing the grievance. If either

party chooses to present evidence from a witness the principles of this section should also be followed.

iii. During an investigation factual witness statements will be taken from relevant witnesses. These must be signed and dated by the witness. If on the rare occasion no signature can be obtained the statement may still be presented, in such circumstances deliberation by those responsible for considering the grievance should be given to the reliability, credibility and weight to be given to the statement. The investigator will ensure that the statements are relevant, fair and objective. Only information that is directly relevant to the grievance(s) will be considered and documented. When statements are taken, dates and any names quoted should be written out in full and the date the interview took place should be included. Testimonials regarding an employee's personality and character will not be accepted as witness statements, nor may witnesses be called to attend a hearing for this purpose.

iv. A witness should be aware that:

a) Any information provided will be included in their statement; information not relevant should not, therefore, be disclosed.

b) They will be given one opportunity to review and amend the statement, without changing or removing the general content of the information provided.

c) Their statement is likely to be referred to during a grievance hearing if one is required and,

d) A copy of their factual statement will be shared with each party.

v. A witness who is not a school employee may provide a witness statement (not a testimonial) but would not usually attend a grievance hearing.

vi. Any witness to be called at a hearing must have submitted a written statement of their knowledge of the case in advance of the hearing which has been exchanged with all parties in accordance with the normal rules for exchanging paperwork.

vii. If any witnesses are called, they should be given appropriate notice. The person hearing the case must be informed not later than 4 working days before a formal grievance hearing of the names of any witnesses who will be attending.

viii. If the Hearing Manager reaches a point in the meeting where they need further information, the meeting should be adjourned to allow for any relevant investigation to take place. This information should be sought before the Hearing Manager reaches a final decision.

ix. The outcome will be confirmed to both parties in writing within 3 working days of the decision by the Hearing Manager. It is not necessary for the Hearing Manager to reconvene the meeting to communicate the decision.

6.6. Appeal

i. Either party may appeal in writing to the Chair of Governors or Trustees within 7 calendar days of receiving the written decision. The appeal notice should make clear the reasons for the appeal. The Chair will arrange for 3 members of the Governing Body not previously involved, to hear the appeal. Whilst new evidence on the same grievance may be submitted, no new grievance(s) may be added to the proceedings. New evidence will only be considered if relevant to the grievance outcome decision and there was a good reason why this had not been included as part of the original grievance.

ii. The hearing will take place without unreasonable delay of the Chair receiving the written notice of appeal. This is not a reinvestigation of the original grievance, but a review of the decision made by the original Hearing Manager. The person that heard the formal stage grievance should attend,

iii. The original Hearing Manager or Chair of the Panel who considered the grievance initially will present their reason for reaching their decision to the Panel. Alternatively, a statement clearly setting out why the decision was reached can be submitted to the hearing.

iv. If the Panel reaches a point in the appeal hearing where further information is required, the meeting should be adjourned so that advice can be obtained. Following the appeal hearing, the Chair of the Panel considering the case will give a response to the grievance. The Chair of the Panel will send written confirmation of the outcome to both parties within 3 working days of the decision, and their decision is final. There is no further right of appeal.

v. See Appendix 2 for guidance on grievance meetings and appeals.

# 7. Overlapping Disciplinary and Grievance Issues

7.1. An employee may raise a grievance after disciplinary proceedings have started against them. The Hearing Manager should consider suspending the disciplinary case for a short period – no more than one week – to consider the implications of the grievance on the disciplinary. If the grievance has been raised before the appeal stage of the disciplinary procedure and the matters of grievance are linked to those of the disciplinary, then the grievance should be considered within the disciplinary procedure. If the grievance concerns matter that are unrelated to the disciplinary, then a separate process under the grievance procedure will need to start. In almost all cases, the grievance should be considered after the completion of the disciplinary. The exception here would be where there is a long delay in the progress of the disciplinary- perhaps because the conclusion of police proceedings is awaited.

# 8. Collective Grievances

8.1. Where a group of employees take out a grievance, this will be heard using the process above in section 4 i.e., one grievance claim. It may be appropriate for the aggrieved employees to appoint one or two individuals to present the grievance.

# 9. Vexatious, Malicious and Frivolous Grievances

9.1. All grievances will be taken seriously, but only those which raise a legitimate or genuine concern will be heard or investigated. The Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Trustees as appropriate will not consider any frivolous or vexatious grievances or any repeat complaints which have already been responded to. Evidence of malicious grievances may result in formal disciplinary action being taken against the employee(s) concerned.

# 10. Exit Interviews and Resignation Letters

10.1. If a Headteacher/ Chair of Governors or Trustees receives a letter of resignation from an employee that raises what appears to be a grievance, they should write to the employee and ask them whether they would like a response to their grievance. An issue raised in an exit interview or leavers' questionnaire might constitute a grievance. Any concerns about the content of a resignation, exit interview or leavers questionnaire, should always be raised before responding.

# 11. Grievances brought by Ex-Employees.

11.1. A 2-step grievance procedure is available for all ex-employees.

11.2. **The sequence of events is:**

i. Step 1 - Statement of Grievance:

a) The ex-employee sets out the grievance in writing to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors or Trustees within 30 calendar days of their final contractual working day.

ii. Step 2 -Response:

a) The Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Trustees responds in writing within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the grievance notification.

b) If an employee leaves employment whilst their grievance is in progress, the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Trustees must write to the employee (or, by now, ex-employee) to ask whether he/she wishes to continue with consideration of the grievance.

11.3. The options to be presented to the employee are:

i. Continue with current procedure:

a) If the existing grievance is at the formal stage of the grievance procedure, then the formal meeting should proceed, and the individual will be given the opportunity to appeal. If the existing grievance is at appeal stage, then it should be allowed to continue; the decision at this Appeal stage will be final and there will be no further right to appeal.

ii. Proceed with ex-employee procedure as set out in this policy.

# Appendix 1

## EMPLOYEE'S NOTIFICATION OF GRIEVANCE

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

You should complete the form and hand it to the Headteacher, the person against whom the grievance is being brought and the Chair of Governors. You are advised to keep a copy.

1. Name: ……

Post held: ……

2. Describe briefly:

a) The nature of your grievance.

b) When did you first raise your grievance, and with whom?

c) What action has been taken on your grievance at the informal stage?

Signed: …….. Date: …….

# Appendix 2

## 1. Guidance for the Hearing Manager Conducting a Grievance Meeting

1.1. Hold the session in private, away from interruption.

1.2. Listen carefully to what the employee has to say.

1.3. Stay calm, especially during any more emotional moments.

1.4. Find out precisely what the grievance is about, i.e., do not concentrate solely on the facts; try to understand the feelings behind them.

1.5. Ask open questions (i.e., questions that can't be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no')

1.6. Carefully summarise what the employee has said.

1.7. Look for solutions.

1.8. Once feelings have cooled down – and it is possible that all the person wanted to do was to let off steam – begin to look for constructive solutions to the problem by:

i. encouraging the person to suggest constructive solutions.

ii. making your own suggestions to solve the problem.

iii. seeking an adjournment if necessary.

iv. thinking carefully before taking a decision.

v. accepting that it may not be possible to satisfy everything the employee wants.

1.9. Follow up the session by writing a summary of the key points and the agreed actions to the employee and, subsequently, by checking that actions promised (if any) took place.

1.10. Formal meeting attendees:

i. Individual or Panel of Governors hearing the grievance.

ii. The employee and their work colleague and no-one else.

iii. Any witnesses (part hearing only).

iv. Note taker.

v. In cases where the grievance is against a fellow employee the employee and their representative will also be present.

1.11. Order of Business:

i. The Hearing Manager will ensure that everyone is introduced and will explain how the meeting will be run.

ii. The aggrieved employee (or their representative) will be asked to explain the grievance, if necessary, supported by documents/and or witnesses. The aggrieved employee may be asked questions by the individual or Panel hearing the grievance, and if present, the employee whom the grievance is against.

iii. In cases where a grievance is against another employee, the employee will be asked to respond. Again, questions can be asked.

iv. Hearing Manager sums up main points of grievance.

v. If further information/investigation is required to allow the Hearing Manager to make a decision, the meeting can be adjourned until the information is gathered.

vi. Following the meeting and any appropriate further investigation the Manager considering the grievance will give a response.

# 2. Hearing a Grievance Appeal

2.1. The Panel's Proceedings

i. The Panel will need to elect a Chair. The following is the usual and fair way to proceed.

a) Let the individual or representative explain their reasons for appeal, introducing witnesses, where necessary.

b) If there is an individual who is the target of the grievance, allow this individual or representative to ask any relevant and pertinent questions of the aggrieved party and witnesses. Governors may also ask questions at this point.

c) Where there is an individual who is the target of the grievance, allow them to make a statement in response to the appeal issues introducing witnesses where necessary.

d) Let the aggrieved party ask any relevant and pertinent questions arising from the response. Governors may also ask questions at this point.

e) The Hearing Manager from the original hearing is asked to explain the reasons for their decision.

f) The Chair and members of the Panel ask any remaining questions of clarification.

g) The parties summarise the main points relating to the grievance, the aggrieved person or representative speaking second.

h) The parties withdraw but can be recalled if the Panel requires clarification.

i) The Panel's decision is conveyed orally to both parties and confirmed in writing within 3 working days. The Panel may, particularly after a lengthy hearing, adjourn and reconvene at another time to consider its decision, but written confirmation within 3 working days of reaching a decision applies.

# 3. What the law says

3.1. On 6th April 2009, the statutory dispute resolution procedures were repealed in their entirety and there is no legal requirement now to follow a set statutory procedure when dealing with grievances. However, it is recommended to follow the basic practical guidance which is provided by the ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance. This sets out principles for handling grievance situations in the workplace and has been adopted in these procedures. A failure to follow the Code does not make a person or organisation liable to proceedings. However, employment tribunals will take the Code into account

when considering relevant cases. Tribunals will also be able to adjust any awards made in relevant cases by up to 25 per cent for unreasonable failure by either party to comply with any provision of the Code.

# 4. Support for employees

4.1. When an employee is setting out their grievance in writing, help should be given to those whose first language is not English, or those who have difficulty expressing themselves on paper. In these circumstances, the employee should be encouraged to seek help from a work colleague.

4.2. Managers requesting or arranging a meeting of any nature relating to a grievance must ensure that they consider any special arrangements that the employee might require to ensure their full involvement in the meeting. For example, special allowance may need to be made for employees whose first language is not English, employees who have any disabilities or employees with little experience of working life.

# 5. Selecting a Governor Panel

5.1. In all cases, Governors selected for a Panel must have had no previous involvement in the case.

5.2. Record keeping:

i. At any interview at the informal stage or any hearing at the formal stage, the Hearing Manager or the Chair of the Panel (as appropriate) will be responsible for ensuring that, as a minimum, a written record of the main points and of any actions that are agreed or determined is kept.

ii. The Hearing Manager or Chair of the Panel (as appropriate) should ensure that a note-taker attend the hearing to record the main points and actions.

iii. All written records are confidential to the parties involved and will be held securely in confidential files.

# Appendix 3

## 1. Guidance for Employees on How to Raise a Grievance

1.1. What is a grievance?

i. Anyone working in a school may, at some time, have problems or concerns about their work, working conditions or relationships with colleagues that they wish to talk about with management. Examples of a grievance include (but are not limited to): conditions of employment, health or safety, relationships at work and new working practices.

1.2. What should I do if I have a grievance?

i. Always try to resolve the grievance at source, if necessary, by talking it through with the Headteacher. This allows for problems to be resolved quickly and normal working relationships to resume.

1.3. What is the informal process for handling a grievance?

i. Talk to Headteacher by requesting a special one-to-one meeting for this purpose.

ii. What do I do if the grievance cannot be resolved informally?

iii. Provide a written submission (see relevant section in this policy).

iv. What information should I include in the Notice of Grievance?

a) What the grievance is about. (Be clear and specific).

b) Who is involved and when?

c) Why the grievance has not been resolved at an earlier stage.

d) How you think the grievance can be resolved.

1.4. What happens once I have submitted notice of a formal grievance?

i. A meeting will be arranged at which you can set out your grievance. This is the formal stage of the procedure. All parties may be accompanied by a work colleague and no one else. The Chair of the meeting will tell you what the outcome is.

1.5. What happens if I do not like the outcome of this meeting?

i. The job of the Hearing Manager at a formal meeting is to reach a conclusion that is fair and equitable to all sides. If either party feels that the outcome is not fair, then an appeal meeting before a Panel can be requested. The decision of the Panel at this stage is final: there are no further hearings.