

11. Grievance Procedure

It is our policy to ensure that you all have access to a procedure to help deal with any grievances relating to your 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.

Issues that may cause grievances include:

- (a) terms and conditions of employment;
- (b) health and safety;
- (c) work relations;
- (d) bullying and harassment;
- (e) new working practices;
- (f) working environment;
- (g) organisational change; and
- (h) discrimination.

If you have difficulty at any stage of the Grievance Procedure because of a disability or because English is not your first language, you should discuss the situation with your line manager as soon as possible.

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

We have a separate Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy that may be useful if you believe that you have been the victim of bullying or harassment or wish to report an incident of bullying or harassment involving other people. It is set out in this document.

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 Grievance 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 in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

If untrue and malicious grievances are put forward in bad faith against a colleague or manager, then this may be considered as gross misconduct and may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

Raising grievances informally

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with your line manager. If you feel unable to speak to your line manager, for example, because the complaint concerns him or her, then you should speak informally to Chair of Governors or relevant member of the FHT SLT. If this does not resolve the issue, you should follow the formal procedure below.

Formal written grievances

If your grievance cannot be resolved informally you should put it in writing and submit it to your line manager, indicating that it is a formal grievance. If the grievance concerns him or her, you may submit it instead to the head teacher, chair of governors or relevant member of the FHT SLT.

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

Investigations

In some cases, it may be necessary for us to carry out an investigation into your grievance. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from you and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents.

The investigation may be carried out by an appropriate person.

Any matters relating to the conduct of a head teacher will be directed to the chair of governors or CEO of the FHT for investigation and action.

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.

We may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting where we consider this appropriate. In other cases, we may hold a grievance meeting before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases, we will hold a further grievance meeting with you after our investigation and before we reach a decision.

Right to be accompanied

You have the right to be accompanied throughout the grievance process.

Grievance meetings

We will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within 15 working days of receiving your written grievance. You will normally be given 5-10 working days' notice of any meeting.

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.

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.

After an initial grievance meeting we may carry out further investigations and hold further grievance meetings as we consider appropriate. Such meetings will be arranged without unreasonable delay.

Your companion at a grievance meeting may make representations to us and ask questions, but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during the meeting.

We will write to you, usually within 5 working days of the final grievance meeting, to inform you of the outcome of your grievance and any further action that we intend to take to resolve the grievance. We will also remind you of your right of appeal.

Appeals

You have the right to appeal the outcome. A meeting will normally be arranged within 25 working days of receiving your written appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by an appropriate person.