

GOSCHOOL GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Purpose and Aims

Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employers. All employees have a right to know how their grievances will be resolved. School grievance procedures are required to promote fairness and consistency in the treatment of individual employees and reflect the relevant policy on equal opportunities and avoidance of discrimination.

The procedures will be followed when dealing with a grievance or dispute in relation to an individual's employment.

The policy and procedures aim to ensure that:

- the procedures are known by all employees.
- any employee can raise grievances and issues in respect of their employment within the school.
- grievances are dealt with promptly and in a fair and supportive manner.
- a fair appeal procedure is available.

Scope

The procedure applies to all employees of the school.

The grievance procedure will not be available to employees who:

- have been notified of the date of an interview or disciplinary hearing.
- concerning an alleged act of misconduct by them and when the declared grievance is connected with that matter.
- have been notified of the date of an interview or formal hearing concerning alleged unsatisfactory performance by them and whose grievance concerns, or is connected with, that matter or the arrangements for that interview or hearing.
- fail to comply with the relevant time limits in the procedure, unless management and the employee (or their representative) concur in advance to a particular time limit being waived.
- attempt to restart the grievance procedure in respect of a grievance which has been heard and resolved under the procedure within six months of that hearing, unless the grievance is about actions which have taken place after the earlier grievance was decided upon.

The Nature of Grievance

Grievances can arise from a variety of sources, and it is important for members of GoSchool to recognise that many potential problems and difficulties can and are better resolved informally and as quickly as possible. Formal procedures are intended to be used for problems which are serious in themselves, or serious because they remain unresolved after informal steps have failed to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

The Academic Director has the discretion to delegate responsibility for dealing with grievances to appropriate line managers at the informal stage.

The senior management team will appoint an Appeal Panel to hear any appeals arising from the decision.

The Academic Director

The Academic Director has the responsibility for managing the procedures and for resolving grievances as far as is reasonably practicable. The Academic Director must ensure that the procedures are known to all staff.

The Academic Director has the delegated power to require appropriate line managers to resolve grievances and disputes in the first instance, and to pass the matter to the Head if it has proved impossible to resolve satisfactorily.

When the grievance has been formally raised with the Academic Director he/she may appoint an Investigating Officer to act on his/her behalf. It will be made clear to the employee that the responsibility for the decision lies with the Academic Director.

The Academic Director/Investigating Officer must aim to resolve any formal grievances referred to him/her as promptly and as sensitively as possible. The Academic Director/Investigating Officer must advise the employee, in writing, that he/she may be accompanied by a colleague at the grievance meeting.

The Academic Director must ensure that any decision regarding the grievance is communicated to the employee, wherever possible, at the end of the meeting, and confirmed in writing within 5 working days. The letter must also confirm to the employee their right to appeal to the governing body and to be accompanied by a school colleague at the appeal meeting.

Investigating Officer

The Investigating Officer will investigate the grievance at the request of the Academic Director. He/she will carry out a thorough investigation, after which he/she will make findings and recommendations. The Investigating Officer does not have the authority to make decisions unless he/she is investigating a grievance against the Academic Director or raised by him/her.

Line Managers

The appropriate line managers have the responsibility for ensuring that any informal grievance brought to their attention is considered promptly and a resolution sought. They are expected to apply the procedures and conduct any investigation in a sensitive and considerate manner.

The line manager is expected to inform the Academic Director that a grievance has been raised and is being dealt with informally.

The line manager must reply orally to the employee as soon as possible and no later than 2 working days after the informal grievance is raised.

If it proves impossible to resolve a grievance satisfactorily the line manager can refer the matter to the Academic Director with the consent of the complainant.

Confidentiality

In order to preserve the rules of natural justice for all parties, the Academic Director/Investigating Officer must ensure that matters relating to any disputes are not discussed outside the meetings called expressly to consider the matters.

Rights of the Employee's Companion

The employee's School colleague has the right to:

- address the hearing, putting the employee's case.
- sum up the case.
- respond on the employee's behalf to any views expressed at the hearing and confer with employee during the hearing.
- The school colleague may not answer on behalf of the employee any questions put directly to the employee and may not address the hearing if the employee indicates that he/she does not want the companion to do so.
- The school colleague may not stop the employee explaining his/her case, nor prevent anyone else at the hearing from making a contribution.

Appeal Panel

Senior Management will appoint an Appeal Panel of three members which must hear any appeal within 10 working days of the appeal being received. The Panel must consider evidence from all relevant parties and must allow all parties to be heard at the meeting.

The members of the Panel should ensure that they have not been involved in any prior stages of the grievance procedure. They must declare any prior involvement and play no further role.

The Panel may call for expert advice wherever appropriate.

The Panel must retire to make its decision, which may be in the form of a recommendation if appropriate. The Panel can announce its decision at the end of the meeting, or later, but written confirmation of the decision must be sent to all parties within 5 working days.

The Employee

Employees must first discuss a grievance on the relevant subject with their line manager, as soon as possible and no later than 2 months of the event giving rise to the grievance unless the line manager is the subject of the grievance, or it is otherwise inappropriate to raise the grievance with the line manager.

The employee has the duty to use every endeavour to resolve the dispute satisfactorily. The employee has a right to bring a school colleague to any meeting.

Senior Management expects that employees will also set out with the intention of settling the dispute as speedily as possible.

Where an employee is aggrieved on any matters involving other staff, they should discuss the matter initially with the individual concerned. If they feel unable to do this or this fails to resolve the matter, it should be raised with their line manager unless the line manager is the subject of the grievance, or it is otherwise inappropriate to raise the grievance with the line manager.

If the dispute cannot be resolved informally the employee must follow the formal procedures.

If the employee is not satisfied with the final decision he/she has a right of appeal to the Appeal Panel.

Right of Appeal

The aggrieved employee has the right to appeal to the Appeal Panel, in writing, within 10 working days of receiving written notification of the decision.

The appeal should take place within 10 working days of the receipt of the written notification of an appeal.

Copies of all relevant documents will be provided 5 working days in advance of the meeting to all parties involved.

The aggrieved party is entitled to be accompanied by a school colleague and will be given an opportunity to present their case to the Panel.

The Academic Director/Investigating Officer may be accompanied by a Human Resources Officer for the purposes of advice.

The decision, or recommendations, of the Panel will be given to all parties at the end of the meeting, or as soon as possible thereafter, and confirmed in writing within 5 working days.

There is no further right of appeal, and the findings of the Appeal Panel will be binding on all parties.