

## Grievance Procedure Policy

Date	Review Date	Endorsed by	Approved by	Link Governor
Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Resources Committee	Governing Body	Steven Lock

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Education Act 2002 places grievance procedures "under the control of the governing body" and gives governing bodies with delegated budgets, a statutory responsibility to establish a grievance procedure and to take appropriate steps to make this available to staff at the school. These powers are contained in Section 35 of the 2002 Act for community schools and in Section 36 of the 2002 Act for voluntary aided schools and are set out in detail in the School Staffing Regulations 2009.
- 1.2 Obligations of governing bodies to comply with employment legislation, include a responsibility to avoid discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, race, religious and disability and to conform to the provisions of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and Disability Discrimination Commission (DDC) Codes of Practice.
- 1.3 Due regard should also be had to the management guidance on the application of this procedure.
- 1.4 The grievance procedure is a confidential process and those participating in it must not disclose the nature of the grievance or the outcome to any person who is not a party to the process except when seeking appropriate union or legal advice and/or if required to do so by law and/or a member of immediate family. Additionally, Headteacher's, Governors and investigating officers must remind all employees at any meetings, hearings or in correspondence, of their obligation to maintain confidentiality. If a disclosure is made that is in any way malicious or inappropriate to the circumstances of the grievance, this may lead to disciplinary action under the Schools Disciplinary Procedure

### 2. Role of the Governing Body

- 2.1 There is a legal obligation on governing bodies to provide written details of grievance procedures. The Employment Rights Act 1996 requires employers to include in the written terms and conditions of employment a specific reference to the grievance policy which must include to whom an employee should go with any grievance and must provide for the right for an employee to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague at a grievance hearing and the right of appeal. The procedure must be available to any employee who has a grievance.
- 2.2 This procedure should be used in all cases where one or more employees have a grievance against another employee, the Headteacher or the governing body. Where an employee has a grievance against the LA, use of the Council's grievance procedures will be appropriate.

### 3.0 Definition of grievances

A grievance enables individuals to raise issues with management about their work, or about their employers', clients' or their fellow workers' actions that affect them. It is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of all the issues that might give rise to a grievance but some of the most common include: terms and conditions of employment; health and safety; relationships at work; new working practices; organisational change and equal opportunities or the failure to be appointed/promoted.

#### **4.0 General advice on grievances**

- 4.1 The aim of a grievance procedure is to enable any member of staff to have their grievance heard and to seek to resolve a situation or seek redress. The intention is that grievances should be settled quickly and fairly and first be discussed informally with the immediate manager or supervisor or other appropriate person.
- 4.2 Grievances can arise from a variety of sources. They can arise among members of staff or with the Headteacher or immediate line managers. They can be of a relatively simple nature or of fundamental importance. They can involve the governors of the school, or the administration of the school, or the Local Authority. To meet this situation, there should be a first stage to the procedure which may enable a grievance to be resolved informally and without recourse to any subsequent stage.
- 4.3 It is recognised that many matters that may become the subject of a formal grievance stem from simple misunderstandings. It is therefore incumbent upon both the Governing Body, the school and its employees, but particularly upon individual managers, always to strive to make their actions, instructions and requirements clear. Headteacher's, managers and governing bodies should always respond to questions and explain the reasons for their actions. Similarly, it is incumbent upon employees not to pursue frivolous matters or malicious grievances using this procedure.
- 4.4 If an employee is uncertain about the nature of their grievance or to whom it should be addressed, advice should be sought from their trade union or professional association or the school's personnel providers.
- 4.5 Governors or Headteacher's should also seek advice on procedural issues relating to the management of grievances, from the LA or the schools' personnel provider.
- 4.6 All staff have a duty to ensure that personal information, given in confidence, remains confidential. Staff expect that any medical or personal information given by them to the Leadership Group is treated in confidence and not passed to others without their permission. The Data Protection Act 1998 also regulates how personally-identifiable data are handled.

#### **5.0 What does not constitute a Grievance**

- 5.1 Where the grievance relates to actual conditions of service and not about their application, which are the responsibility of the Local Authority and are thus not capable of resolution at school level, it is recommended that a direct approach should be made to the Schools Personnel Team.
- 5.2 Grievance issues which should be raised directly with the LA are the application of maternity leave, sickness or special leave provisions, time off for recognised trade union officials or other contractual conditions of service as laid down in national and local documents, about which the school has no discretion.
- 5.3 Where a complaint relates to an issue of harassment it may be more appropriate to use the Harassment and Bullying Procedure.
- 5.4 Where an employee has concerns about malpractice within the LA or school, for instance, a criminal offence, fraud, miscarriages of justice or a danger to health and safety which fall outside the scope of this and other LA or school procedures, then these should be dealt with under the Whistleblowing Policy.
- 5.5 Formal grievances involving complaints of discriminatory acts on grounds of sex, sexuality, age, marital status, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins, or of racial or sexual harassment, should be investigated and where there is sufficient evidence will be progressed in accordance with the disciplinary procedures. Such acts, if upheld are contrary to disciplinary rules and could be construed to be unlawful. The advice of the School Personnel's Advisor and the Equality Officer should always be sought in such cases.

### **The following matters cannot be raised under this grievance procedure:**

1. Amounts deducted for income tax, national insurance, and other statutory deductions from pay;
2. Matters raised by a group of staff for which a collective disputes procedure is available;
3. Appeals against the grading of posts (which should be dealt with under the Pay Appeals Procedure)
4. Matters over which the Council or school has no control.

### **6.0 The use of the Grievance Procedure- General Principles**

- 6.1 It is fundamental to any grievance procedure agreement that normal working should be maintained until all stages of the procedure have been exhausted. Where the grievance under discussion is concerned with proposed changes in working hours or other agreed working arrangements, the status quo should not be varied until the provisions of this procedure have been exhausted, whilst the matter is under consideration.
- 6.2 Grievances can run concurrently with any formal procedure which includes an appeals mechanism, but with regard to process matters rather than the substantive matters which can be addressed by rights of appeal. This should not cause delay to the formal procedure.
- 6.3 A grievance procedure is intended to provide a speedy method of resolving grievances and, so far as is practicable, the prescribed time limits should be observed. Therefore, all parties in agreeing to adhere to these procedures undertake to make themselves available for meetings organised to meet the timescales within the procedure (see page 13).
- 6.4 For the purposes of this procedure, a working day shall be a day that an employee is expected to work. However, there may arise on either side substantial reasons (e.g. a school vacation, sickness), why exceptionally, it would be desirable to extend the time limits. Any such extension should be agreed by all parties or in the absence of agreement to be determined by management at a time within the next available 10 working days.
- 6.5 The aggrieved employee shall be entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union official at any meeting relating to her/his grievance. Any other employee attending such meetings, for example as a witness, may be accompanied, but not represented, by a colleague or trade union official. For the purposes of this procedure, a colleague is defined as an employee in the same organisation.
- 6.6 In cases where the person or panel hearing the grievance needs to obtain further information, or to enquire about policy or other issues, it is open to them to defer the matter for a period of time agreed with the member of staff and their representative to enable such enquiries to be made. The advice of officers of the Authority may be requested to assist in the resolution of grievances. It is recommended that all cases are notified to your personnel provider so that their advice can be forthcoming.
- 6.7 The time limits specified in the procedure may be modified by mutual agreement and every effort should be made to deal with grievances as speedily as possible. If the time limits at Stage 1 or 2 are unreasonably exceeded, the employee will be entitled to request that it proceeds to the next stage of the grievance procedure.
- 6.8 Hearings should take place during an employee's normal working hours wherever possible. It is expected that employees will make all reasonable efforts to attend hearing, in order that their grievance can be resolved speedily. Employees cannot be required to attend a grievance hearing outside their normal contractual working hours or teachers' directed time. If an employee is requested and is willing to do so, in order to resolve matters quickly, time off in lieu or paid overtime for attendance outside their normal contractual hours may be given.
- 6.9 Nothing in the procedure should preclude the right of an official of a recognised Trade Union to raise independently with the Headteacher or governing body any employee relations matter affecting the school. Where an official of a Professional Association or Trade Union attends a meeting with the Headteacher or the governing body, a representative of the LA may be invited by the Headteacher or governing body to be present.

## **7.0 THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The following procedure should be used in all cases where an employee has a grievance against another employee, the Headteacher or the governing body.

### **7.1 Stage 1 - Informal procedure**

- 7.1.1 Where members of staff have a grievance relating to their employment, they should, where appropriate, try to resolve the matter by direct approach with the person(s) concerned, or through discussion with an appropriate senior person. If necessary to resolve the matter, the employee should also have discussions with the Headteacher, where necessary.
- 7.1.2 If a direct approach is considered inappropriate or where the matter is not resolved as a result of such an approach, the employee should raise the grievance with her/his line manager (or other appropriate member of staff) and should inform the person(s) against whom s/he has a grievance, that s/he proposes to discuss the matter with the Headteacher or other appropriate senior member of staff (or, in cases of grievances against the Headteacher, with the Chair of Governors).
- 7.1.3 Where a member of staff requests a personal interview (informal stage) with the Headteacher, head of department or other senior member of staff, this should be granted within five working days of the request being made. The Headteacher, head of department or other senior member of staff, should seek to resolve the matter personally, or by mutual agreement, in consultation with other members of staff. The Headteacher may also consult with the chair of governors, officers of the Authority or representatives of Trade Unions or Professional Associations as s/he considers appropriate.
- 7.1.4 Many complaints or minor grievances are best resolved informally. If, however, the matter is considered too serious for an informal resolution, or if an informal approach fails to resolve the matter, the formal grievance procedure should be invoked.

If the matter is within the delegated authority of the Headteacher, the procedures in (Stage 2) should be followed.

### **7.2 Stage 2 - Formal procedure (for employees other than Headteacher's)**

- 7.2.1 Where the grievance has not been resolved under the informal procedures described above, the member of staff concerned should submit a formal written notice of the grievance to the Headteacher, together with any relevant documents. If the grievance involves another member/members of staff, copies should be sent to all those involved, unless the circumstances makes this inappropriate. The Headteacher may choose to delegate this to a senior manager to investigate at this stage.
- 7.2.2 The option of mediation to resolve the grievance can be considered at any stage of the grievance and if not considered earlier must be considered during stage 2 or a reason provided as to why it is inappropriate.
- 7.2.3 The Headteacher should seek to resolve the problem by following the step set out below (formal stage):
1. arrange to meet the employee within 10 working days of receipt of the written grievance;
  2. inform the employee of their right to be accompanied in the meeting by a trade union representative or colleague;
  3. the employee can request an alternative date for the meeting if their union representative is unable to meet on the date proposed and an alternative date should be offered within 5 days of the original meeting;
  4. Explore in the meeting, with the member of staff, the nature of the grievance and any action that s/he wishes to have taken to resolve it;
  5. obtain and consider thoroughly all the relevant facts and investigate the matter if necessary;

6. determine whether the grievance is justified and, if so, what action can be taken/recommended to resolve it;
7. Confirm whether the grievance is considered justified, or what action is to be taken or recommended to resolve it; If any element of the grievance is considered not justified, the reasons for arriving at this conclusion should be fully explained;
8. Notify the employee of the outcome in writing within 10 working days of the meeting;
9. inform the employee of their right of appeal, and the requirement to lodge this within 10 working days of receipt of the decision letter, with confirmation as to whom it should be addressed, stating their ground for appeal as they relate to the findings and recommendations;
10. keep a proper record of the grievance, notes of all meetings and correspondence, including the facts established, the decision taken and the reason for it, together with the dates upon which the grievance was heard and responded to

### **7.3 Stage 3 - Grievance Appeal Hearing**

- 7.3.1 If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and/or the matter is still not resolved, it should be referred to an appeal hearing of a panel of three school governors. They shall seek to settle the grievance, with advice from and in consultation with their personnel advisor. The timescales for convening the Hearing are as stated on page 13.
- 7.3.2 All relevant documents, including the Headteacher's written report, should be submitted to all parties at least ten days in advance of the hearing. The aggrieved employee may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative, but any other employee attending such meetings, for example as a witness, may be accompanied by a colleague or their trade union representative.
- 7.3.3 The decision of the appeal panel is final, and should be communicated in writing to the employee within 5 working days of the hearing. If the grievance is upheld, the remedies should be specified. If the grievance is not upheld, then the written notification should include the expectation that normal working be resumed.

### **8.0 Grievances raised by the Headteacher**

- 8.1 Where a Headteacher has a grievance relating to their employment, they should first endeavour to resolve the matter by direct approach to the person concerned. If not resolved, s/he should then discuss the matter either with the Chair of Governors or the Head of Schools Personnel Services. The Head of Schools Personnel Services may seek consultation with the Chair of Governors, and vice versa, or with representatives of the teachers' organisations concerned, as may be thought appropriate. Where the matter is still not resolved, the Headteacher should submit the grievance in writing to both the Chair of Governors and the Director of Children and Young People Service.
- 8.2 Where the grievance lies with the governors of the school, a meeting of the Grievance Panel should be arranged by them within ten working days or as soon as is practicable thereafter. The Headteacher and any other teacher who may be involved shall be entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or an official representative of their trade union or professional association. It is strongly recommended that the Director of Children and Young People Service, or his/her representative should be consulted in order that he/she can arrange for advice to be given to the Grievance Panel when they hold their meeting.
- 8.3 Where the procedures outlined above have been followed and the problem is still unresolved, there shall remain the right of appeal to the Appeals Panel of the Governing Body as set out for other employees above.

#### **Procedure to be used where there is No Delegation to a Governing Body**

- 9.1 In circumstances where there is no Governing Body or where delegation has been removed, the following variations to the procedure shall apply.
  - Where there is no Headteacher, the role of the Headteacher or Governors Panel in the

procedure will be taken by the Director of the Children and Young People's Service or an officer nominated by him/her.

- Appeals will be heard by the Director of the Children and Young People's Service or an officer nominated by him/her. The officer will have no previous involvement in the case and will, where practicable, be senior to the officer who first heard the matter.

## **10 Grievances raised by Former employees**

10.1 In the event that a grievance is received after an employee's leaving date, whilst this procedure will not apply, the grievance should be considered and responded to in writing, to avoid any claims against the School.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

### **Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy**

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement. (See Policy Evaluation).

---

**This policy was reviewed and endorsed by the Full Governing Body of The Devonshire Hill Nursery and Primary School on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015.**