



SIR THOMAS RICH'S

Staff Grievance Policy

This Statement was drawn up in accordance with the statutory ACAS code of practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Date Reviewed: September 2023

Status: Statutory

Responsibility: The school's senior management team (SMT) has operational responsibility for this policy. The Trustees' Personnel Committee agree its principles, review procedures and monitor its implementation.

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1. About this procedure

It is our policy to ensure that all employees have access to a procedure to help deal with any grievances relating to their employment fairly and without unreasonable delay. The School aims to investigate any formal grievance an employee raises, hold a meeting to discuss it with employees, inform employees in writing of the outcome, and give employees a right of appeal if they are not satisfied.

This procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

This procedure has been implemented following consultation with the teaching staff and support staff trade unions. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the School may amend it at any time.

2. Using this procedure

Issues that could cause grievances may include:

- terms and conditions of employment;
- health and safety;
- work relations;
- bullying and harassment;
- new working practices;
- working environment;
- organisational change; and
- discrimination.

This Grievance Procedure cannot be used to complain about dismissal, disciplinary action or pay decisions as the policies relating to those decisions contain the right of appeal.

The School has a separate Staff Anti-harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy that may be useful if an employee has been the victim of bullying or harassment or wishes to report an incident of bullying or harassment involving other people. It is available from the Headmaster.

The School operates a separate Whistleblowing Policy to enable employees to report illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice. However, where an employee is directly affected by the matter in question, or where an employee feel an employee has been victimised for an act of whistleblowing, an employee may raise the matter under this Grievance Procedure.

If an employee has difficulty at any stage of the Grievance Procedure because of a disability or because English is not their first language, an employee should discuss the situation with their line manager as soon as possible. Written grievances will be placed on an employee's personnel file along with a record of any decisions taken and any notes or other documents compiled during the grievance process.

3. Raising grievances informally

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with an employee's line manager. If an employee feels unable to speak to their manager, for example, because the complaint concerns him or her, then an employee should speak informally to a more senior manager such as a member of the School's Senior Management Team. If this does not resolve the issue, an employee should follow the formal procedure below.

4. Formal written grievances

If an employee's grievance cannot be resolved informally an employee should put it in writing and submit it to their line manager, indicating that it is a formal grievance. This should be done without unreasonable delay. If the grievance concerns their line manager, an employee may submit their grievance to the Headmaster instead. If the grievance concerns the Headmaster then an employee should submit it to the Chairman of Trustees, who may nominate a governor to consider the grievance. The written grievance should contain a brief description of the nature of the employee's complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved. In some situations, we may ask an employee to provide further information. It is also essential to state what actions or remedy is being sought by the employee.

5. Investigations

It may be necessary for the School to carry out an investigation into the employee's 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 an employee and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. The investigation may be carried out by an employee's line manager or a senior member of staff or someone else appointed by us.

An employee 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.

The School may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting where the School considers 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 an employee after our investigation and before we reach a decision.

6. Right to be accompanied

An employee may bring a companion to any grievance meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a work place colleague. An employee must tell the person holding the grievance meeting who the employee's chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting.

At the meeting, the employee's companion may make representations to the School and ask questions, but should not answer questions on an employee's behalf. An employee may talk privately with them at any time during the meeting.

Acting as a companion is voluntary and employees' colleagues are under no obligation to do so. If they agree to do so, they will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.

If an employee's chosen companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, we may ask an employee to choose someone else.

The School may, at our discretion, allow an employee to bring a companion who is not a colleague or union representative (for example, a member of an employee's family) if this will help overcome a disability, or if an employee have difficulty understanding English.

7. Grievance meetings

The School will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within one week of receiving an employee's written grievance.

An employee and their companion (if any) should make every effort to attend grievance meetings. If an employee or their companion cannot attend at the time specified, the employee should inform the School immediately and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

The purpose of a grievance meeting is to enable an employee to explain their grievance, how they think it should be resolved, and to assist the School to reach a decision based on the available evidence and the representations an employee has made.

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

The School will write to the employee, usually within one week of the final grievance meeting, to inform the employee of the outcome of their grievance and any further action that the School intends to take to resolve the grievance. We will also remind an employee of their right of appeal. Where appropriate, we may hold a meeting to give an employee this information in person.

8. Appeals

If the grievance has not been resolved to the employee's satisfaction, the employee may appeal in writing to the Headmaster (or to the Chairman of Trustees if the previous written submission was to the Headmaster), stating their full grounds of appeal. This must be done within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to the employee.

The School will hold an appeal meeting, normally within one week of receiving an employee's written appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by someone who has not previously been involved in the case (although they may ask anyone previously involved to be present). This may be a more senior manager, the Headmaster or a panel of Trustees (usually selected from the Personnel Committee). An employee has a right to bring a companion to the meeting (see paragraph 0).

The School will confirm the final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.