

# Grievance Policy

Bucklesham Primary School



<b>Approved by:</b>	Rachael Rudge	<b>Date: September 2025</b>
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## **LA Grievance Policy and Procedure**

### **1. Introduction**

A grievance is a concern, problem, or complaint that an individual has in relation to their work or the people they work with. The grievance process may also be used when dealing with complaints of bullying and harassment and the Bullying and Harassment Policy should be consulted as appropriate.

The purpose of the Grievance Policy and Procedure is to ensure matters of concern are dealt with thoroughly, fairly, swiftly, and consistently. Employees, their representatives, and managers are required to seek a resolution to any grievance as quickly as possible and within the timeframes set out in this policy.

This policy contains both informal and formal stages.

For the formal stages of the grievance procedure there is a statutory entitlement for the aggrieved employee to be represented by a work colleague or trade union representative.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all teaching and support staff employed in schools in which the governing body has adopted them for use.

An employee working within a school but employed by another organisation should raise any grievance in line with that organisation's Grievance Policy and Procedures.

### **3. Confidentiality**

All grievance procedures, including details of any investigation and statements relating to it, are confidential to the parties involved in the process, except for official bodies who have a right to require disclosure of information.

Any breach of confidentiality may be considered under the Disciplinary Policy.

### **4. Exclusions**

This policy does not apply to complaints of professional malpractice, wrongdoing, or criminal activity. Such concerns should be made immediately, in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.

### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

Any concern or complaint raised in accordance with this policy must be raised in 'good faith'.

Any grievance should be raised in a timely manner without undue delay. In usual circumstances a grievance that is raised due to an event that occurred more than six months previously will not be considered. The only exceptions will be:

- when there is evidence that a grievance relating to a recent event(s) is clearly linked to a series of events that may have begun more than six months ago
- an acceptable rationale for the delay is presented
- where harassment, bullying or discrimination is alleged in circumstances that made it difficult for the employee to voice their grievance at the time.

Any concern or complaint found to have been raised for malicious, vexatious, false, or similar reasons may give cause for disciplinary action to be taken against the complainant(s).

It is expected that employees, their representatives, and managers make every reasonable attempt to resolve a grievance quickly and informally before invoking the formal processes of this policy.

It is also expected that upon raising a grievance, be it informal or formal, the aggrieved party will clearly state their desired outcome and focus on resolution from the beginning of the process.

All employees are expected to cooperate with the implementation of this policy and procedure and where appropriate the accompanying Bullying and Harassment Policy.

## **6. Grievance Procedure**

Whether raised at the informal or formal stages of the process it is important that the aggrieved employee approaches the right person with their grievance.

Anyone who wishes to raise a concern(s) or complaint(s) under the grievance procedure should speak to the Head Teacher in the first instance.

If the concern or complaint is about the Head Teacher themselves then the individual should speak to the Chair of Governors in the first instance.

In exceptional circumstances where the grievance is against the Governing Body and it is not possible for the Head Teacher or Governors to address the grievance, with the agreement of all parties, the grievance may be referred to the Director for Children and Young People (or their nominated representative). A meeting of the respective parties will be called in accordance with the timescales set out in this policy.

Refer to flowchart (appendix)

## **7. Informal Stage**

Many grievances can be resolved informally and quickly, and there is an expectation that all parties will seek to do this without unreasonable delay before any formal steps are considered. The relevant person (see 6 above) receiving the grievance will

try and resolve it informally with the party or parties concerned as soon as possible and whenever possible.

A meeting must take place as soon as possible upon receipt of an informal grievance and usually within 5 working days of receipt of the grievance.

Where the grievance has been raised due to a dispute between employees the relevant person may like to consider involving a trained mediator to help resolve the situation (the employees in dispute must all agree to the mediation process for it to be invoked).

There is no statutory right to be accompanied by a colleague or Trade Union Representative at the informal stage of the grievance process, but it may be beneficial to allow this.

The relevant person (see 6 above) confirms in writing the outcome of the informal meetings, and any action / requirements discussed at the meeting.

## **8. Formal Grievance Process**

If it has not been possible to resolve the grievance informally, and the aggrieved employee wishes to pursue the matter formally, they should do so in writing (if they have not already done so), without unreasonable delay. The written grievance must be submitted to the relevant person (see 6 above) and clearly state the grounds on which the formal grievance is being raised, what steps have already been taken to resolve the issue(s) along with the resolution(s) the employee is seeking by raising the matter formally.

## **9. Grievance Hearing Meeting**

Upon receiving the formal written grievance, the relevant person (see 6 above) should acknowledge receipt of the grievance in writing. The relevant person must convene a formal grievance hearing meeting as soon as possible and without undue delay. It may be necessary to seek Governors from another school to avoid using Governors who are parents at a grievance hearing meeting. At this stage it is still good practice for the relevant person to make one final attempt to explore with the complainant whether the grievance can be resolved informally before the formal process is invoked. It is expected that all parties encourage prompt action regarding meetings, decisions, and communications regarding this matter. A meeting must be held to hear the employee's grievance and this is usually arranged within 10 working days after receipt of the formal grievance.

### **(If being heard by a panel section)**

The hearing meeting will provide the employee with the opportunity to explain their grievance in full and confirm the resolution they are seeking. The hearing manager or panel hearing the grievance will have the opportunity to question the employee

about their grievance and explore the reasons for the grievance and consider any evidence provided in full.

The employee has the statutory right to be accompanied at a formal grievance meeting by a colleague or Trade Union Representative.

In some cases, it may be necessary to adjourn the process to allow for further investigation to take place to ensure thorough consideration of the grievance and to make recommendations for action. If so, the employee will be kept informed regarding the process and the hearing meeting will be reconvened following these investigations. Any such further investigation shall be carried out as stipulated in sections 10 & 11 below.

Any decision made by the hearing manager / hearing panel must be conveyed to the employee verbally in the first instance, and followed up in writing, summarising the rationale for the decision.

The decision should be clear on whether the grievance is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld and detail relevant recommendations for resolutions where appropriate. It is the responsibility of the hearing manager/chair of hearings panel to follow up and ensure any recommendations are implemented.

## **10. Investigation**

In some cases, it may be necessary to carry out additional or a more formal investigation into the grievance. The extent of any investigation will depend on the nature of the concern(s)/complaint(s) and any allegations that have been made.

If it is decided at the formal grievance hearing meeting that a formal investigation into the grievance is required, it is good practice to consider the following.

- Who will conduct the investigation? – this could be the hearing manager/ members of the hearings panel themselves or an independently appointed investigator.
- What will be the scope of the investigation? (be clear exactly what will be investigated).
- A summary of the agreed scope of the investigation (including who will conduct the investigation) should be confirmed in writing so all parties are clear on exactly what is being investigated.

An investigation should be carried out without undue delay and it is expected that all parties and potential witnesses avail themselves in a timely manner to comply with the investigation. The employee raising the grievance may or may not be required to be interviewed as part of the investigation dependant on the circumstances and the discretion of the investigation officer. If the grievance is against more than one person, each person will be invited to a separate meeting with the hearing manager. The complainant will not be present at these meetings. The complainant and the employee(s) against whom the complaint is made have the right to be represented by a trade union representative or work colleague. The employee is responsible for making arrangements for their representative to attend the investigation meeting.

If an independent person is appointed to investigate the grievance, they may report their findings and recommended outcomes for the consideration of the person or panel hearing the grievance.

## **11. Outcome**

Following the completion of a formal investigation into a grievance, the hearing manager or chair or the hearings panel will invite the aggrieved employee to an Outcome Meeting to deliver the findings of the investigation into the grievance. The hearing manager will also meet with the people against whom the complaint was made to relay the outcomes. The employees may be accompanied at this meeting by a union representative or work colleague. The outcome will also be communicated in writing within 10 working days.

The purpose of this meeting is to deliver the outcome of the investigation into the grievance raised by the employee. The employee and/or their representative may ask questions at the meeting but the meeting is not a platform to rehear the grievance, reopen the investigation or hear any new complaint(s) (the scope of the grievance investigation will have been agreed at the original Grievance Hearing Meeting).

The hearing manager or panel will decide and inform the employee whether their grievance has been upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld, considering the evidence obtained from the investigation into the grievance. Recommendations for resolutions where appropriate may also be discussed (see appendix A for possible recommendations). It is the responsibility of the hearing manager or chair of panel to follow up and ensure any recommendations are implemented.

The employee will be advised of their right of appeal if they do not agree with the outcome. The decision, along with the rationale for the decision, and any recommendations for resolutions, will be confirmed to the employee in writing following the meeting. The letter will also detail the employees' right of appeal.

## **12. Appeal**

The employee has the right to appeal any part of their grievance that they feel has not been satisfactorily resolved. An appeal must be in writing setting out the employee's reasons for disputing the decision. New evidence will not be considered at this stage.

An appeal must be received within 14 calendar days of the date of the outcome letter of the grievance. An appeal hearing will usually be arranged within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal letter. The appeal should be heard by a different person or panel with delegated responsibility to whom heard the original grievance. Governors may need to be sought from other schools to avoid using Governors who are also parents. Following the appeal hearing a final decision will be conveyed to the employee within 10 working days of the hearing and confirmed in writing.

### **13. Further Action**

It is important that arrangements are made to follow up any recommendations and/or actions as required. This can be agreed as part of the grievance outcome to ensure they are implemented as per the decisions.

Where a grievance has been submitted and there is evidence to suggest it is demonstrably vexatious, malicious, or false the school reserves the right to consider appropriate action under the disciplinary process.

### **14. Collective Grievances**

A collective grievance occurs where a group of staff feel aggrieved about the same issue. Where this occurs, the employees will be asked if they wish to have the grievance considered collectively and if so whether they want to nominate one employee as a spokesperson. If the grievance is dealt with in this way it cannot then be raised by the same employees individually. The collective grievance procedure will follow the same timescales and process as that for individual grievances.

## Appendix A: Summary of process & supporting documents (Version 3.0 Aug 2024)

Summary of process	Grievance Procedure
<p><b>Informal resolution</b></p> <p>Employee meets with relevant manager informally and to discuss their concerns, with a view to resolving informally.</p> <p>Where necessary, a manager meets informally with the other party(ies), again with a view to resolving informally.</p> <p>The Manager confirms in writing the outcome of the informal meetings, and any action / requirements discussed at the meeting.</p> <p>In the majority of cases, no further action will be required.</p>	
<p><b>Formal action – acknowledgement and meetings</b></p> <p>Where informal action does not work, or where the grievance is deemed to be too serious to be addressed informally, the complainant will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put their grievance in writing setting out the details and, where possible, an indication of what they are trying to achieve as an acceptable outcome.</li> </ul> <p>The relevant manager will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge receipt of the grievance and invite the complainant to a meeting to discuss the grievance in more detail within ten working days.</li> <li>Arrange a meeting with the person/people whom the grievance has been made against to inform them that a grievance has been raised against them. Use the managers checklist (template 046). Follow this up in writing (use template 129), include brief details about the grievance (it is not usually appropriate to share the full details of the grievance at this stage) and set out the next steps in the process. If the grievance is against more than one person, each person will be invited to a separate meeting with the manager. The complainant will not be present at these meetings.</li> <li>Consider (only absolutely where necessary) the need for redeployment or suspension for one, or more, of the parties</li> <li>Encourage the employee(s) to seek advice from their trade union and provide details of the school’s Employee Assistance Programme.</li> </ul>	<p>SCHRC 128 – Letter acknowledging receipt of formal grievance with options</p> <p>SCHRC 046 – Manager’s checklist informing employee of complaint made against him/her</p> <p>SCHRC 129 – Letter informing that a complaint has been made against an employee</p>

In particularly complex cases, the relevant manager should consider whether it would be appropriate to appoint an Investigating Officer to conduct an investigation into the complaint ahead of the meeting.

**Investigation**

Where necessary the relevant manager will investigate the complainant’s case (or commission and brief an Investigating Officer to conduct the investigation) by:

- Interviewing parties involved
- Collating and summarising their findings of the investigation in the form of a written report

The complainant and the employee(s) against whom the complaint is made have the right to be represented by a trade union representative or work colleague.

The employee is responsible for making arrangements for their representative to attend the investigation meeting.

SCHRC 376 – Checklist for Investigating Officer

SCHRC 380 – Template for fact-finding meeting minutes

SCHRC 057 Template Grievance Investigation Report available from HR.

**Communicating the outcome of the process/investigation to all parties**

Where an Investigating Officer has been commissioned, the relevant manager/panel will review the Investigating Officer’s report and recommendations.

The relevant manager/panel will:

- meet with the complainant to relay the outcomes, including details of right of appeal
- meet with person / people against whom the complaint was made to relay the outcomes
- put the outcomes in writing to the complainant, normally within ten working days of the meeting, or as soon as practicably possible, including details of the right to appeal

Possible recommendations include:

- No further action
- Informal action for example; programme of action/support/training or review of policies and procedures ‘

SCHRC 386 – Template letter inviting to outcome meeting

SCHRC 387 – Outcome of grievance letter to Employee who raised Grievance

SCHRC 381 – Outcome of grievance letter to person complained about

SCHRC 382 – Guide for Governors hearing cases



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary, independent mediation between the parties</li> <li>• Consideration of the case by a Governors' Disciplinary Hearings Panel under the school's Disciplinary procedure</li> <li>• Further investigation into additional grievances/other matters which may have emerged throughout the investigation</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Appeal</b></p> <p>Heard by a different, usually more senior manager, or a new panel of governors.</p> <p>The chair of the appeal (or appeal panel as appropriate) will decide the outcome and notify the complainant in writing, normally within ten working days of the appeal, or as soon as practicably possible. There is no further right of appeal</p>	<p>SCHRC 383 – Invite to Grievance Appeal</p> <p>SCHRC 384 Outcome of Grievance Appeal Letter</p> <p>The letter giving the outcome of the appeal will follow a similar format to SCHRC 387, with appropriate amendment e.g. it will not give a further right of appeal.</p>

**Footnote:** The template letters referred to above follow the sequential progress through each stage of the Grievance Procedure. The template letters can be adapted to suit the particular circumstances of the case, with the support of HR.