

Model grievance procedure

(i) Purpose

Grievances can arise from a variety of sources. They can arise among members of staff, with the headteacher or with the governors. They can be of a relatively simple nature or of fundamental importance.

This procedure is designed to enable the school governors, headteacher and staff to foster good relations by:

- discouraging the harbouring of grievances
- assisting the resolution of individual grievances in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality
- enabling grievances to be settled as near as possible to their point of origin
- ensuring that grievances are dealt with fully, promptly and fairly.

The procedure sets out:

- an informal process through which most grievances may be resolved without recourse to any subsequent stage
- a formal procedure to be invoked when the first stage has failed, or is inappropriate.

(ii) Representation

At all stages, the staff involved are entitled to be accompanied and/or represented by a friend (who may be a colleague, professional association/trade union rep or other adviser). During the formal procedure, witnesses may be called and questioned by either side.

(iii) Procedure

Informal stage

Where a member of staff has a grievance that involves another member (or members) of staff, s/he should first of all

endeavour to resolve it by direct approach to the person(s) concerned.

If considered necessary, the employee should then request a personal interview with the head of department, a senior manager or the headteacher, as appropriate.

The interview should take place within five working days of the request. The manager should seek to resolve the problem personally in consultation with any other member(s) of staff involved and may, by mutual agreement, seek consultation with the headteacher, the chair of governors or reps of professional associations/trade unions, as appropriate.

Where an employee has a grievance with the headteacher or the governing body which does not involve any other member of staff, s/he should advise or consult with the headteacher before making an approach to the chair of governors.

Formal stage

Where the matter has not been resolved informally as above, the employee should submit a formal written notice of the grievance to the chair of governors, with a copy to the headteacher and any other person(s) concerned. The written notice should:

- include full details of the grievance, together with any supporting documents
- set out the steps already taken to resolve the issue
- state the resolution now requested.

Any other person(s) concerned in the grievance may make a formal written response (together with any supporting documents) to the chair of governors,

with a copy to the headteacher and the employee raising the grievance. This response should normally be submitted within 10 working days of receipt of the written notice of grievance.

The headteacher (where s/he is not otherwise concerned) may submit a written report to the chair of governors, with a copy to the parties concerned, within 10 working days of receipt of the written notice of grievance.

A hearing will then be arranged before the appropriate committee of the governing body to consider the grievance. The documents submitted shall be made available to the committee in advance. This hearing shall take place after receipt of any written response(s) and/or report, normally within 20 working days of receipt of the formal notice of grievance.

At least five working days' notice of the hearing will be given to the parties concerned, who may attend in person and be accompanied and/or represented by a friend as in paragraph **(ii)** above.

The above time limits may be altered by agreement of the parties concerned. The committee, in seeking to resolve the grievance, may adjourn the meeting or defer its decision if this is considered appropriate to promote conciliation or obtain further information on relevant factors.

The decision of the committee, and its reasons, will be confirmed to the parties concerned, in writing, with five working days.

(iv) Appeals

Any party to the grievance may appeal in writing to the chair of governors within 10 working days of receiving the committee's written decision. The notice of appeal should set out the reasons, with a copy to any other person(s) concerned and to the headteacher.

The appeal shall be heard by the governors' appeals committee, comprising only members who have not previously been involved. All documents already submitted shall be available to the committee. This hearing shall normally take place within 15 working days of receipt of the notice of appeal.

At least five working days' notice of the appeal hearing will be given to the parties concerned, who may attend in person and be accompanied and/or represented by a friend as in paragraph **(ii)** above.

The appeals committee's decision will be confirmed to the parties in writing within five working days. This decision will be final.