Grievance Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that employees or volunteers raise with the Trust. These may be about any aspect of their work, treatment that they have received, or relationships with others. This policy is also used when dealing with complaints of bullying and/or harassment. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that complaints are dealt with swiftly, fairly and consistently.

2.0 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in Trust settings (including those seconded to other schools or organisations).

2.2 An employee working within the Trust but employed on another organisation's terms and conditions of employment should have any grievance managed under their own organisation's appropriate policy/procedure.

2.3 All volunteers are also expected to treat and be treated in a manner in line with this policy. Volunteers refer to the Volunteer Policy and those individuals in governance should refer to the Governance Code of Practice.

3.0 Confidentiality

3.1 All grievance proceedings, including details of any investigation and statements relating to it, are confidential to the parties concerned, with the exception of official bodies which have a right to require disclosure of information. The Trust Board will be notified of the outcome of any formal process, once it has concluded. Any breach of confidentiality may also be considered under the disciplinary policy.

4.0 Exclusions

4.1 This policy does not apply to complaints of professional malpractice, wrongdoing, safeguarding concerns or criminal activity: such complaints should be raised immediately via the Whistleblowing Policy. Similarly, this policy will not be used to raise complaints where any other policy (such as the disciplinary policy) applies.

4.2 Pay Appeals will be considered under the specific arrangements in place for that purpose, as laid out in the Pay Policy.

4.3 The Grievance Policy will not be used to deal with complaints made after employment or a period of volunteering has ended, for any reason. However, if a grievance has been raised and not concluded before an employee leaves, they will be invited to continue with the grievance process.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Any complaint raised under this policy should be made in good faith. Any complaint found to have been made for malicious, false or similar reasons may give cause for disciplinary action. All individuals are expected to co-operate in the implementation of this policy and the accompanying Dignity in the Workplace Policy (where applicable) both of which are intended to secure fair and reasonable treatment and equality of opportunity for all parties.

5.2 Whether raised at the informal or formal stages of this process (see below) it is important that the employee approaches the right person with their grievance.

5.3 Within the Trust the following applies: If the complaint is an informal one and involves other employee(s) or volunteers the individual may make a direct approach to the individual(s) concerned. Otherwise, they should directly approach their line manager, or the Academy Head in order to explore resolution of the matter. Where the grievance is about the Academy Head, it should be referred to the Chief Executive Officer. Where the Academy Head has an informal grievance of their own, this should be referred to the Chair of the Trust Board in the same way.

5.4 The same principles apply within the formal stages (see below) of this procedure, with the grievance being submitted to the Academy Head, CEO or Chair of the Trust Board as appropriate. The grievance would then be heard by the Hearings Committee consisting of a panel of members from the Trusts' Leadership & Governance Structure, accordingly. Where an individual reaches the appeal stage, they would lodge the appeal with the person, or the Chair of the Committee, who heard the first formal stage. The Appeals Committee will then be convened to hear the appeal and members of this committee would differ from those on the Hearings Committee.

5.5 In exceptional circumstances, e.g. where the grievance is against the Leadership or Governance of the Trust and it is not possible for the CEO or Trust Board to address the grievance, with the agreement of all the parties the grievance may be referred to an external body. A meeting of the respective parties will be called, usually in accordance with the timescales set out in this policy.

6.0 Informal stage

6.1 Many grievances can be resolved informally and quickly, and there is an expectation that all will seek to do this, without unreasonable delay, before formal steps are considered. The relevant person (see section 5 above) receiving the complaint will try to resolve it informally with the party or parties concerned wherever possible. Where there is a dispute, it may be appropriate to involve a trained mediator in these circumstances, with the various parties' agreement.

6.2 It is important that the informal process is documented with the recommended resolution recorded on Every HR, with the aim to support a formal process should it be required.

7.0 Formal grievance process

7.1 If a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved via informal measures, then the individual raising it should set the complaint down in writing, without unreasonable delay, and state what steps have already been taken to resolve the grievance, and what they believe to be the solution to it. This complaint should be given, together with any supporting documentation, to the relevant person as set out in section 5 above.

8.0 Investigation

8.1 In some cases it may be necessary to carry out an investigation into the 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 the individual and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. The investigation may be carried out by the relevant person or someone else appointed by the relevant person.

8.2 The individual must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include disclosing the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents and attending interviews, as part of the investigation.

8.3 The investigation may be instigated before holding a grievance hearing where this is considered appropriate. In other cases, the grievance hearing may be held before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In such cases a further grievance hearing will be held with the individual after the investigation and before any decision is reached.

9.0 Hearing

9.1 The relevant person will arrange a hearing, usually within two working weeks of the individual's written grievance being received although this may depend on what if any investigations are being carried out.

9.2 The hearing will be conducted in a manner which allows the individual to explain the grievance and how it might be resolved.

9.3 At the formal hearing the individual is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a workplace colleague or an advocate as agreed by the chair of the hearing panel. The person accompanying will be allowed to address the hearing, to help state the individual's case. This person does not have the right to answer questions on the individual's behalf.

9.4 A decision may be given at the end of the hearing, but in any case, will be set out in a written response to the individual within two working weeks. This response may also contain what action is intended to resolve the grievance, if any part of it is upheld.

9.5 In some cases it may be necessary to adjourn the process to allow for further investigation to take place to allow a thorough consideration of the grievance, and to make recommendations for action. If so, the individual will be kept informed regarding the process and the meeting/process reconvened following the further investigations.

10.0 Appeal

10.1 If the individual feels that their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, then they may appeal against the findings. A written notice of appeal should be submitted, stating the grounds for the appeal. An appeal hearing will be arranged, usually to take place within two working weeks.

10.2 New evidence is admissible for an appeal, providing that it is submitted at least a week before the hearing. The hearing will usually take the same format as the formal grievance hearing as above. The individual has the same right to be accompanied.

10.3 A written response will be issued to the individual within two weeks of the date of the hearing, unless further investigation or similar is required. The decision made at the appeal is final. The individual will not be able to raise another grievance about the same matter.

11.0 Collective grievances

11.1 A collective grievance occurs where a group feel aggrieved about the same issue. Where this occurs, the individuals will be asked if they wish to have the grievance considered collectively and if so, whether they want to nominate no more than two individuals as a spokesperson. If the grievance is dealt with in this way it cannot then be raised individually. A collective grievance procedure will follow the same timescales and process as one raised individually. Union support would be encouraged.

12.0 Perpetrator

12.1 In the event of a hearings panel finding in favour of the individual, the perpetrator will be advised of the decision within 2 working weeks. This will require consideration alongside the Disciplinary Policy.

12.2 If the perpetrator feels that the governance finding is inaccurate, unfounded or unfair they may appeal against the finding. A written notice of appeal should be submitted stating grounds of the appeal. An appeal hearing will be arranged, usually to take place within two weeks. All procedures as above will apply.

Grievance Policy Quick Guide

Stage	Action	Timescale
1. Informal Resolution	Employee raises the concern with the appropriate manager/person. Informal resolution or mediation should be explored and recorded.	**Without unreasonable delay**
2. Formal Grievance Submitted	Employee submits their grievance in writing, including steps already taken to resolve the issue and the desired outcome.	**Without unreasonable delay** after the informal stage
3. Investigation (if required)	Investigation undertaken where appropriate. This may take place before or after the hearing depending on the circumstances.	**As required**
4. Grievance Hearing	Formal hearing arranged to consider the grievance.	**Usually within 2 working weeks** of receiving the written grievance (unless investigation is required first)
5. Outcome Issued	Written outcome provided, including any actions to resolve the grievance.	**Within 2 working weeks** of the hearing
6. Appeal Submitted	Employee submits a written appeal stating the grounds.	**As soon as possible following the outcome** (policy does not specify a deadline)
7. Appeal Hearing	Appeal heard by a different panel from the original hearing.	**Usually within 2 working weeks** of receiving the appeal
8. Appeal Outcome	Written appeal decision issued. This decision is final.	**Within 2 weeks** of the appeal hearing (unless further investigation is required)
9. Perpetrator Notification (where applicable)	If the grievance is upheld, the alleged perpetrator is informed of the finding and any subsequent action considered.	**Within 2 working weeks** of the panel's decision
10. Perpetrator Appeal (if applicable)	Perpetrator may appeal the finding.	**Appeal hearing usually within 2 weeks** of receiving the appeal

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended By	Details of Change
V2	03/10/2019	Principal/CEO	Scheduled review, updated local governance terminology and clarified cross referencing to other policies
V3	25/09/2020	EFS	Scheduled review. No changes recorded
V4	10/11/2021	Principal/CEO	Scheduled review. Pronouns amended to be gender neutral. Updated in terms of the Trust's governance structure. Clarification made regarding a grievance raised against the CEO or Trust Board. Confirmation of the need to accurately record the informal stage of the process.
V5	06/10/2022	EFS	Scheduled review. No changes recorded.
V6	17/10/2023	EFS	Scheduled review. No changes recorded.
V7	13/08/2024	CEO	To clarify position of volunteers and possible outcomes for perpetrator.
V8	23/09/2025	EFS	Scheduled review. No changes recorded.
V9	03/08/2026	EFS	Scheduled review. Addition of quick guide timeline.

Approval
This policy will be reviewed annually by Head of Service People or as required by changes in legislation.

At every review, this policy will be approved by the Finances & Resources Committee.

The policy was last approved by the Finance & Resources Committee on 12/11/2026.

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