

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Learning Academies Trust

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LEARNING
ACADEMIES TRUST

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CHANGES

Policy date	Summary of change	Author	Version	Review date
14/03/2025	Policy updated.	Amy Bosworth HR Lead and Business Partner	3.0	14/03/2027

1. INTRODUCTION

The Learning Academies Trust is committed to promoting excellent working relationships within a positive work environment, where employees feel able to discuss any work-related problems they may have. The Trust recognises there may be occasions when employees want to raise a grievance, and this policy provides a clear and transparent process by which such steps can be taken.

Most problems that arise can be quickly and satisfactorily resolved informally through discussion between those employees directly involved, where necessary, with the support of the Headteacher or other senior member of staff. This policy aims to ensure that whenever reasonable and practicable employees will, in the first instance, utilise this informal approach when seeking to resolve concerns they may have.

Where informal steps fail to resolve a concern, the formal stages of this grievance policy will be applied.

Employees who raise a grievance will be given the opportunity to fully explain the issue of concern and the remedy they are seeking. The Trust will listen to concerns raised before deciding the appropriate next steps, taking into account the interests of the individual. Employees can be confident any grievance raised will be addressed sensitively and confidentially.

The Trust reserves the right to engage external third-party assistance at any stage of the grievance process.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Individual Grievance

An issue, conflict or complaint raised by a colleague about something negatively impacting upon them, which can relate to:

- Implementation of terms and conditions of employment
- Health and safety
- Difficult working relationships
- Bullying - offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour,
- Harassment - unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010
- Discrimination or unfair treatment as a result of a protected characteristic
- New working practices
- Working environment
- Recruitment and selection decisions for internal candidates

This list is not exhaustive.

2.2 Collective Grievance

An issue, conflict or complaint raised by two or more colleagues who wish for it to be addressed as part of the same resolution procedure.

2.3 Facilitated Conversation

A process in which a trained person who is neutral to the parties and concerns assists in resolving differences between two or more parties, building understanding and strengthening relationships.

2.4 Bullying

Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power which is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person.

2.5 Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 which either has the purpose or reasonable effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

2.6 Sexual Harassment

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which either has the purpose or reasonable effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Trust employees, apart from in the following cases:

- Where alternative appeal processes exist (e.g., pay appeal process)
- Where the issue has previously been addressed under this policy and there is no new evidence
- A collective dispute which should be raised by the Trade Union formally in writing to the CEO in line with our Trade Union recognition agreement
- Where the matter relates to the application of conditions of service outside the Trust's control e.g., arising from national, provincial or local agreements
- If the employee raises a concern in compliance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act; please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy for further details

4. PRINCIPLES

- To provide a clear and effective process for raising and resolving grievances
- To ensure employees feel supported and valued when addressing workplace concerns
- To resolve issues fairly, consistently, and in a timely manner
- To prevent grievances from escalating into more serious conflicts
- To protect the rights of employees and ensure compliance with relevant employment laws

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Employees:** Employees are responsible for raising grievances in a timely and professional manner, following the outlined grievance process. They are also responsible for providing accurate and relevant information during investigations.
- **Management:** Managers are responsible for addressing grievances and ensuring that grievances are handled fairly and in accordance with this policy.
- **Human Resources (HR):** HR is responsible for overseeing the grievance process, ensuring investigations are fair and unbiased, and maintaining records of grievances and outcomes. HR will provide guidance to employees and management throughout the process.

6. INFORMAL PROCEDURE

6.1 Informal Resolution

Employees are encouraged to approach their Line Manager / Headteacher in the first instance to discuss concerns and attempt to informally resolve them. Informal discussion can frequently solve problems without the need for a formal process.

If an employee is dissatisfied with the outcome, or if the concern is deemed sufficiently serious that informal action is not suitable, the formal grievance procedure will be initiated.

In the event of an informal concern being about the Headteacher/CEO, the employee is advised to discuss the concerns with the Chair of Governors/Chair to Trust Board who will attempt to resolve them.

Matters to consider when approached informally by an aggrieved employee;

- Ask relevant questions that will assist in understanding the employee's concern/s and what outcome/s they are seeking
- Reassure the employee that the concern will remain confidential
- Consider who you may need to speak with to resolve the concern
- Endeavour to find a suitable outcome at the earliest opportunity

- Make summary notes of all conversations, outlining the concerns discussed and the outcomes from the meeting including any recommendations. Detail how the grievance was resolved and provide a copy to all relevant parties

If the aggrieved employee feels their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved through informal discussions, the matter will be moved into the formal procedure.

7. FORMAL PROCEDURE

7.1 Step 1: Statement of Grievance

To raise a formal grievance an employee should submit a written statement (see Appendix 1) to their Line Manager/Headteacher. Where the grievance relates to the Headteacher/CEO, the written statement should be sent to the Chair of Governors/Chair to Trust Board.

The Line Manager/Headteacher will acknowledge the grievance in writing within 5 working days and will arrange a meeting with the employee at the earliest opportunity.

7.2 Step 2: Formal Meeting

A meeting will be arranged between the Line Manager / Headteacher and the employee. The meeting will be held to discuss the grievance in detail and the employee should take any documents or evidence they have regarding the grievance to the meeting. The employee may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union official, and a minute taker will also be present. A member of the Trust HR team may also be invited to support for advice.

7.3 Step 3: Investigation

Depending on the nature of the grievance, an investigation may be deemed necessary.

The Line Manager / Headteacher will appoint an Investigating Officer and provide clear terms of reference for the investigation.

The Investigating Officer will complete a full investigation into the matter. This may involve holding investigation meetings with witnesses, requiring witness statements to be produced and reviewing written evidence. On completion of the investigation the Investigating Officer will compile a written report summarising their findings. A decision will then be taken by the Line Manager / Headteacher following the investigation and a feedback meeting will be arranged with the employee to discuss the findings. An outcome letter will be sent to the employee following the meeting. The employee will be informed of actions to take if they wish to appeal the outcome.

Minutes of the meeting will be taken, and copies will be made available to the employee. A copy of the minutes will be stored by the HR department

7.4 Potential outcomes

- The grievance is upheld, or partially upheld, and the Line Manager / Headteacher seeks to provide a resolution
- The grievance is not upheld

If the grievance involved other employees in the Trust and it was upheld, the employer may need to refer to the Trust's [disciplinary procedure](#).

7.5 Appeal

An employee who wishes to appeal must formally write to the relevant Director of Education confirming their grounds for appeal. This must be submitted within 5 working days of the grievance outcome.

An appeal panel will be arranged between the Director of Education and the employee. The hearing will be held to discuss the grounds of the appeal in more detail. A decision will be made following the hearing and the employee will be informed in writing within 5 working days.

The Appeal process is the final stage of the Trust Grievance procedure.

8. EXTENDING TIMESCALES UNDER THE PROCEDURE

The timescales outlined in this procedure will be adhered to whenever this is reasonably practicable. There may be extenuating circumstances that are outside of either parties' control, for example, where a key witness is unavailable, or the grievance requires extensive investigation.

Where it is not reasonably practicable to adhere to the deadlines, both parties will discuss and agree any extension to the timelines.

9. SIMULTANEOUS GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

The Trust will make a decision on how to progress matters when an employee raises a grievance about a disciplinary procedure involving them. Acas guidance suggests that disciplinary hearings may be suspended for a short duration while the grievance is investigated. The Trust will assess the exact nature of the grievance and will have the final say over the suspension of a disciplinary procedure.

10. PROCEDURE FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEFT EMPLOYMENT

Wherever possible complaints should be dealt with before an employee leaves employment. However, an employee who has left employment retains a statutory right to have any grievance properly considered by their former employer. This right encompasses a 3-step procedure;

- To lodge a grievance
- To have a meeting
- To appeal against the outcome to the meeting

An ex-employee who wishes to raise a grievance should write to the HR Lead hr@learningat.uk setting out their complaint as soon as possible after leaving employment. The Trust will reserve the right not to consider complaints received longer than 3 months after the date employment ceased.

The handling of the grievance will follow the same procedure as those employed, and the HR Lead will respond to the issues raised in writing directly to the ex-employee.

11. PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

Employees raising grievances are protected from retaliation, harassment, or victimisation by the Trust. Any employee found to be retaliating against an individual who has raised a grievance may be subject to disciplinary action.

12. MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

Employees raising or responding to a grievance will have a duty to act honestly and without malice. Misuse of this policy for the purpose of making a false complaint, with or without malicious intent, will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary policy.

13. KEEPING RECORDS

All documents relating to formal complaints and grievances processes will be kept for an appropriate period in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998/GDPR. Records will include:

- The nature of the grievance
- A copy of the written grievance
- The response
- Action taken
- Reasons for action taken
- Whether there was an appeal and, if so, the outcome and any supporting documentation

All grievances will be treated with confidentiality. Information will only be shared with individuals who need to be involved in the investigation and resolution process.

Employees raising grievances are encouraged to maintain confidentiality to avoid damaging reputations or escalating the issue unnecessarily.

14. SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR EMPLOYEES

We would like to remind staff that further support is available by contacting Simply Counselling, a confidential counselling service, which can be accessed by calling 07568323363 or emailing simplycounsellingcic@gmail.com

Employees seeking advice on the process can visit [Acas Grievance Procedure](#)

15. POLICY REVIEW

This Grievance Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Updates may be made to comply with changes in employment law, organisational changes, or feedback from employees.

16. CONCLUSION

This policy is designed to ensure that grievances are handled in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner. The Trust is committed to resolving issues quickly and effectively, providing a positive and supportive work environment for all employees.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE LETTER TO SUBMIT A GRIEVANCE

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear [Insert Headteacher/Chair of Governors name/Trust HR Team]

I am writing to inform you that I wish to raise a grievance in line with the Trust's Grievance Policy.

I would like this matter dealt with informally/formally (please delete as appropriate). The details of my grievance and the basis for that grievance are given below.

[Insert details]

My grievance took place on [Date] or between [Relevant dates].

I have taken the following steps to try and resolve my grievance but have not been able to achieve the outcome I am seeking.

[Insert details]

I would consider the following to be a satisfactory outcome.

[Insert details]

I intend to exercise my statutory right to be accompanied/represented at that meeting by a colleague/Trade Union/Professional Representative. My colleague's/Trade Union Representatives name is [Insert name] and their contact details are [Insert telephone number and/or email].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Position]