



inspiring the journey for
independence together

Grievance Procedure

Non - Statutory

Reviewed annually

Signed by:  (Chair of the Trust)

Date of review: February 2026

Date of Next Review: February 2027

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Trust is committed to providing a working environment where individuals are treated with fairness, dignity and respect and will take all employee complaints seriously.
- 1.2. Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employer. This procedure allows employees to raise genuine workplace grievances and have them dealt with fairly, consistently, promptly and objectively and with a view of trying to achieve an agreed resolution.
- 1.3. Complaints of harassment and/or bullying are a specific type of grievance and are dealt with under the Harassment and Bullying Procedure or Sexual Harassment Policy, as appropriate.
- 1.4. The procedure follows the guidance contained within the ACAS statutory Code of Practice for Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, and the ACAS guidance on discipline and grievances at work.

2. Equalities Statement

- 2.1. The Trust is committed to providing equal opportunities and access to all. This policy embraces the spirit of managing a diverse workforce and those managing and dealing with grievance or bullying and harassment complaints must ensure that no employee is discriminated against either directly or indirectly or victimised on the grounds of their race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marital or civil partnership status or any stage of gender reassignment. Likewise, the Trust expects all employees to treat their colleagues and wider community with dignity and respect

3. Scope

- 3.1. This procedure applies to all employees of the Trust, regardless of grade or position, hours worked or whether the contract is permanent, temporary or fixed term.
- 3.2. The procedure does not apply to the following situations:
 - Issues outside the control of the Trust in its role of employer.
 - Employees appealing against a dismissal or disciplinary action.
 - Redundancy.
 - Capability.
 - Retirement on ill-health grounds.
 - Rules governing the pension scheme.
 - Job evaluation gradings or appeals against salary gradings.
 - Raising a concern as a 'protected disclosure' under the Whistleblowing Policy.

- Complaints relating to bullying and/or harassment of any kind.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Employees responsibilities:

- To treat colleagues, parents and pupils with dignity and respect.
- To ensure that this procedure is not used to pursue malicious or vexatious complaints and to understand that to do so will be considered a disciplinary matter.
- To make every effort to resolve matters informally and at the lowest possible level before considering the formal stage.
- To actively consider participating in mediation if/when suggested.

4.2 Headteacher/Line Manager responsibilities:

- To make every effort to resolve matters at an informal stage and at the lowest possible level.
- To make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible.
- To treat all staff in a fair and consistent manner. To deal with grievance matters consistently and fairly.
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To liaise with the Trust's external HR Advisors where unsure.

5. Principles

- 5.1 Grievances will be treated seriously and resolved as fairly, equitably and as quickly as possible.
- 5.2 Every effort will be made to deal with matters informally before recourse to the formal procedures.
- 5.3 In the event of grievance or complaint being about the Headteacher, the Director/Chair of Governors will be responsible for the operation of these procedures.
- 5.4 In the event of a grievance or complaint made about the Executive team including the CEO the Chair of Trustees will be responsible for the operation of these procedures.
- 5.5 The complainant (and alleged perpetrator if applicable) has the right to be accompanied by a relevant Trade Union representative or workplace colleague of their choice but by no one else at all formal stages of the procedure.
- 5.6 In the event that an employee raises a grievance in writing that relates to action being taken in accordance with the disciplinary or capability procedure (at any stage before the final appeal stage of the disciplinary/capability procedure), the grievance

will be dealt with as part of that disciplinary/capability process. In these circumstances the employee will be treated as having complied with the grievance procedure.

- 5.7 No employee will be made to feel disadvantaged or victimised in any way because they have raised or pursued a grievance in good faith.
- 5.8 All parties in the procedure must conform to the principle of mutual confidentiality.
- 5.9 Should the employee make a complaint against multiple parties any documentation shared may need to be redacted to protect each party named.
- 5.10 Employees raising grievances which are found to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious will be subject to disciplinary action.
- 5.11 Where practical, every attempt will be made to maintain the status quo until the final outcome of any grievance is settled.
- 5.12 Grievance complaints should normally be made within three months of the decision or act about which the employee wishes to complain. If an employee wishes to complain outside of this period, they will need to show that:
 - within this timescale, they have made reasonable attempts outside of the grievance procedure to resolve the matter informally; or
 - They could not be reasonably expected to have known about the decision or act and have raised a complaint within three months of first becoming aware of it.
- 5.13 An employee or representative who cannot attend a meeting because of illness or other unforeseen circumstances should notify the Trust at the earliest opportunity and give full reasons. The meeting will be re-arranged within five working days of the original date. If the employee or representative fails to attend a second time, without good reason, then the meeting may proceed in their absence. The reasons for non-attendance and for proceeding will be recorded.
- 5.14 Every effort will be made to operate within the prescribed time limits, although time limits may be altered by mutual consent or should specific circumstances necessitate an extension.
- 5.15 If an employee leaves the Trust's employment during the grievance process the grievance process will stop.

6. Informal Resolution Process

- 6.1 It is in everyone's interest for workplace concerns to be dealt with on an informal basis and both employees and Headteachers/line managers have a responsibility to resolve concerns at the lowest possible level.
- 6.2 The employee should first try to resolve the matter informally.

6.3 In the event of a grievance which is not harassment and/or bullying

- 6.4 The employee should firstly speak to their immediate line manager, (unless the line manager is the subject of the grievance) someone more senior than their line manager. The employee should explain the nature of their concern(s) and what action they feel should be taken to enable a resolution to be met, and agree, where possible, any appropriate action necessary to resolve their grievance.
- 6.5 The line manager (or other appropriate person) should arrange a confidential time and place to meet with the employee, as soon as possible, to discuss the matter. The employee will be given a full opportunity to explain their grievance.
- 6.6 The line manager (or other appropriate person) should ensure that they have a full understanding of the employee's grievance and how the employee thinks it should be resolved.
- 6.7 Wherever possible the line manager (or other appropriate person) should seek a means of resolving the grievance to the employee's satisfaction taking into account the Trust policies, procedures, rules and the need for consistency and fairness. This may include carrying out investigations, in respect of which a note of such investigations should be made and kept on the individual's personnel file.
- 6.8 Issues should be resolved within 20 working days if possible.
- 6.9 To conclude the informal process, line managers should provide the employee with a brief summary in writing of the outcome, including any actions agreed. A note should be made and kept on the individual's personnel file.

7. Mediation

- 7.1 An independent third party or mediator can often help resolve grievance issues thereby avoiding the need for the formal process to be instigated, a mediator can be deployed at any stage of the procedure.
- 7.2 Mediation is a voluntary process where the mediator helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement. Any agreement comes from those in dispute, not from the mediator.
- 7.3 Headteachers/ line managers should contact the Trust's external HR Advisors to discuss whether mediation would be a worthwhile option and to discuss the most appropriate provider

8. Formal Resolution Process

- 8.1 If a grievance cannot be settled informally or the employee does not consider an informal process to be appropriate, the employee may commence formal action by raising the issues in writing using the Complaint Form One (attached as appendix two) with their headteacher, with the Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the headteacher, with the CEO if about the Chair of Governors, if about the CEO it

should be raised with the Chair of the Trust. The employee should complete the form as fully as possible outlining clearly the reason(s) for their grievance with details of any events/actions (including dates, times and witnesses), that triggered the complaint and how they would like this resolved.

8.2 Once Complaint Form One has been received the headteacher (or other appropriate person) will acknowledge receipt of the grievance in writing normally within five working days and, if necessary, seek guidance from the Trust's external HR Advisors.

8.3 The next course of action would be either:

- (i) arrange a Grievance Stage One Meeting normally within ten working days of sending the acknowledgement to Complaint Form One; or
- (ii) arrange an investigation to collect more facts in relation to the grievance, in which case the headteacher (or other appropriate person) should advise the employee that the Grievance Stage One - Hearing may be delayed but normally by no more than 20 working days. Either the headteacher (or other appropriate person) or an independent investigating officer (including someone not directly employed by the Trust) will carry out the investigation. Following conclusion of the investigation and preparation of any appropriate report, the employee will be invited to a Stage One Meeting.

8.4 If an individual has been named as the subject of the grievance they will be informed in writing by the Trust. They will usually be interviewed as part of the investigations that are undertaken.

9. Grievance Stage One - Meeting

9.1 The employee will have a right to be accompanied by a relevant trade union representative or workplace colleague at the meeting. Legal representation is not permitted at any stage in this procedure (save in some very specific circumstances).

9.2 At the meeting the headteacher (or other appropriate person) (who may be supported by a member of the Trust's external HR Advisors or an independent HR Consultant/ HR adviser) will hear the grievance and should ask the employee or their representative to re-state their grievance and explain why any informal attempt to resolve the grievance has been unsuccessful or was not undertaken. Where investigation has been undertaken, the investigation and outcome will be discussed, and all parties given the opportunity to ask questions. The investigator may be requested to attend to present their report/ findings. The employee will be given the opportunity to call witnesses (provided the chair has been previously notified and agreed their attendance) and explain any documentary evidence. In the event of the grievance being against the headteacher the Chair of Governors will hear the Stage One meeting, if against the Chair of Governors or Senior Leadership Team the CEO or Deputy CEO will hear the grievance and if against the CEO, the Chair of the Trust will hear the grievance.

- 9.3 Where the headteacher (or other appropriate person) is able, they will consider the grievance and reply to the employee, giving the decision verbally on conclusion of the meeting. The decision will be confirmed in writing within five working days.
- 9.4 Where the headteacher (or other appropriate person) is unable to reach an immediate decision on the grievance or decides that further investigation is required, they will advise the employee of this and give an indication of the proposed timings for any next steps taking into account the action required and aiming to provide a written outcome within 10 working days of the conclusion of any further investigations . If further investigations are not required, a written response confirming the outcome should normally be provided within ten working days of the Stage One meeting.
- 9.5 Where the grievance is not upheld the reasons will be explained in the letter. The employee will be told at this stage that they can appeal (i.e. move to Formal Stage Two – appeal Hearing) if they are not content with the outcome.
- 9.6 If an individual has been named as the subject of the grievance at this point they may be informed of the outcome in writing by the headteacher (or other appropriate person). If it is determined that disciplinary action is required, this will be notified under our Disciplinary procedure.

10. Formal Stage Two – Appeal Hearing

- 10.1 Where an employee feels that their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved they have the right of appeal. The Formal Stage Two – Appeal Hearing is the final stage of the grievance procedure.
- 10.2 The appeal should be registered by the employee in writing using Complaint Form Two (see appendix three) to the Governance Clerk or HR Manager. This should be submitted within five working days of receipt by the employee of the written Grievance Stage One letter.
- 10.3 Employees must register their appeal within this period otherwise they will be deemed to have accepted the decision of the Grievance Stage One Meeting. Appeals will not be accepted after this period unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 10.4 The panel appointed to hear the appeal may seek the advice of the Trust's external HR Advisors.
- 10.5 The employee will be asked to explain clearly on the form why they are dissatisfied with the outcome decision, what alternative solution they are seeking to resolve their grievance and to provide any new evidence and/or information that may be available.
- 10.6 At this stage, anybody named in the grievance appeal may be notified by the Trust that an appeal has been submitted.

- 10.7 The Formal Stage Two – Appeal Hearing will be arranged by the Trust and the employee will be given no less than five working days’ notice in writing of the hearing. The employee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or workplace colleague.
- 10.8 The appeal will be heard by a panel of three individuals, where possible, those individuals should not have been directly involved in the matters connected to the grievance to date and be at a more senior level than the person that heard the grievance, supported by a member of the Trust’s external HR Advisors. The panel will nominate a chair. In some circumstances it may be necessary to seek the assistance of appropriate individuals from another Trust.
- 10.9 The panel will consider the appeal and may determine that further investigations are required prior to the Stage Two hearing. If this is the case, the chair should write to the employee to advise them of this and provide an indication of timings. Once any investigations are complete, the panel should aim to meet with the employee within five working days. At the meeting the panel will consider any representations made by the employee and/or their representative, those of the headteacher (or other appropriate person) who conducted the Grievance Stage One - Meeting and made the decision and any investigations. The person that held the Stage One meeting and any investigator may be asked to attend this meeting. The employee and panel will be given the opportunity to ask questions. The panel hearing the appeal must decide on the basis of both sets of representations, together with any subsequent facts that may have come to light, and any evidence available whether or not to uphold the appeal and/or any part of it.
- 10.10 The panel hearing the appeal will carefully consider the matter and the chair will write to the employee with a decision as soon as reasonably practicably (usually within five working days of the hearing). If it is not possible to make a decision within five working days, the employee will be given an explanation for the delay and told when the decision can be expected. The employee will be told that this is the final stage of the procedure.
- 10.11 If an individual has been named as the subject of the grievance appeal, at this point they may be informed of the outcome in writing by the chair. If it is determined that disciplinary action is required, this will be notified under our Disciplinary procedure.

11. Monitoring and review

- 11.1. A Diversity Impact Assessment will be undertaken at each review of this policy.
- 11.2. The Grievance procedure will be reviewed periodically in line with developments in good practice.

Appendix 1

The Rivermead Inclusive Trust Grievance Procedure

Complaint Form One - to be used for individual and collective grievances.

This form is intended for use by any employee who wants to make a formal complaint about the behaviour of a colleague, their manager or a third party, or any other workplace issue.

In cases of collective grievance, the nominated employee should complete the form, and a continuation sheet should be attached with the names of other employees within the group.

Employees should bear in mind before using this form that they should, wherever possible, try to resolve the matter informally by raising the issue with their manager (or where the complaint is about their manager, their manager's manager).

Where the employee requests that the complaint be dealt with formally or the Trust determine it should be, this form should be completed, and the Academy's grievance procedure will be invoked.

In all circumstances, this form should be completed and delivered to your line manager (or their manager if appropriate, see our Policy) in an envelope marked "confidential" or sent as an email attachment with "confidential" in the subject line.

You must complete all boxes:

Employee name:	Employee job title:
Academy:	Date:
Who is your grievance/complaint about?	
Does your grievance relate to your line manager, if yes, please state the name of line manager.	

Summary of complaint: Set out the details of your complaint (providing as much detail as possible, particularly dates, times, locations and the identities of those involved). You may attach additional sheets if required.

Individuals involved in the alleged incident/complaint – Provide here the names and contact details of any people involved in your complaint, including witnesses

Informal action to resolve the issue: State the nature of any informal action that has taken place to resolve your grievance/ complaint and why this did not work.

Outcome requested: Please set out what outcome you are seeking from your complaint, and why and how you believe that this will resolve the issue.

Declaration: I confirm that the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that making any false, malicious, or untrue allegations may result in disciplinary action being taken against me by the Trust. (In the most serious cases, making false, malicious, or untrue allegations can be treated as gross misconduct.

Form Completed By	
Signature	
For completion by the line manager receiving the form	
Date form received:	
Name of recipient and job title	
Signature:	
Date form acknowledged (within five working days)	
Date consulted with the Trust's external HR advisors	

Appendix 2

The Rivermead Inclusive Trust Grievance Procedure

Complaint Form Two – Employee Grievance Appeal

This form is intended for use by an employee of the Academy who wants to appeal a decision made by the Academy regarding a formal grievance raised by them. This form must be received within five working days of receiving the outcome letter.

In the case of collective grievances this form should be completed by the nominated employee and a continuation sheet should be attached with the names of all staff in the group.

This form should be completed and delivered to the Governance Clerk or HR Manager at the Trust. It should be placed in an envelope marked “confidential” or sent as an email attachment with “confidential” in the subject line.

In accordance with the Academy’s grievance policy, the Academy aims to arrange a formal grievance appeal hearing with you and you will be notified of the date no less than five working days before the hearing.

You must complete all boxes

Employee name:	
Employee job title:	
Academy:	
Date you submitted Complaint Form One:	
Date you were given the decision that you are appealing against:	

Does your grievance appeal relate to your line manager. If yes, please state the name of line manager	
Summary of appeal: Set out here the grounds of your appeal (providing as much detail as possible, including any grounds for considering the grievance procedure to have been flawed, misinterpretation or lack of evidence and why you consider the outcome to have been erroneous in those circumstances. You may attach additional sheets if required.	

Individuals involved in the appeal – Provide here the names and contact details of any people involved in your appeal, including witnesses you wish to call during the appeal.
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Outcome requested: Set out here what outcome you would like to see from your appeal, and why and how you believe that this will resolve the issue.
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Declaration: I confirm that the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that making any false, malicious or untrue allegations may result in disciplinary action being taken against me by the Trust. (In the most serious cases, making false, malicious or untrue allegations can be treated as gross misconduct)

Form Completed by:

Signature:

For completion by the Governance Clerk or HR Manager receiving the form

Date form received:

Name of recipient:

Signature:

Date form acknowledged:

Date consulted with the Trust's external HR advisors.