



West Norfolk
Academies Trust

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

(including Collective Grievance)

Reviewed by: Trustees

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**Consulted with recognised trade unions on
2nd December 2020**

Contents

1	Terms of Reference	1
2	General Principles	1-2
3	Stages of the Grievance Procedure	3-4
Appendix A – ‘Employee’s Notification of Grievance’ Form		

1. Terms of Reference

1.1 This policy applies to all employees of the West Norfolk Academies Trust.

1.2 Definitions:

- “Executive Headteacher” also refers to any other title used to identify the Executive Headteacher, where appropriate, or other senior manager delegated to deal with the matter by the Executive Headteacher.
- “Headteacher/Senior Manager” refers, where appropriate, to any other title used to identify the Headteacher/Senior Manager.
- “Line Manager” refers to the person delegated to manage the employee. This may be a Senior Manager other than the direct Line Manager.
- “Employee” refers to any employee, teaching and support, employed to work at the School/Trust
- “Companion” refers to a person chosen by the employee to accompany him/her at a formal meeting, who shall be a trade union representative or a workplace colleague. A companion is entitled to speak to the employee during any meeting, and confer privately, but may not answer questions on the employee’s behalf.
- “WNAT” refers to the West Norfolk Academies Trust.

2. General Principles

2.1 There are a number of issues that can cause grievances at work and these may include working conditions, application or non-application of policies and procedures, environment, relationships with management or colleagues, duties and responsibilities, or work volume. Grievances may relate to discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. The aim of this procedure is to enable any employee to have their grievance heard and to seek redress as appropriate. The intention is that grievances should be settled quickly and fairly and should be first dealt with as close to the source as possible.

2.2 Where two or more colleagues have identical grievances and want to raise the matter together under the same grievance procedure then the matter will be dealt with as a collective grievance. Colleagues raising a collective grievance must agree (without any pressure being exerted on employees to join the collective process) to engage in one process. Participating colleagues will only be entitled to one meeting at stages 1 and 2 of the procedure and one appeal, if applicable. If all colleagues do not voluntarily agree to this arrangement, or if the grievances are not identical, then the grievances will be dealt with on an individual basis.

2.3 Where the grievance relates to a matter covered by another procedure, for example pay, probation or whistleblowing, then the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant procedure. This grievance procedure may not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. An employee who is dissatisfied with any formal warning should submit an appeal under the appropriate procedure. Issues that are the subject of collective negotiation will not be considered under the grievance procedure.

- 2.4** Where an employee raises a grievance during any existing process or procedure, that process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. However, where the grievance and the existing process are related, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently. The Executive Headteacher has the discretion to decide which option is appropriate, in all circumstances.
- 2.5** The procedure applies to all employees, including the Executive Headteacher, members of the leadership team, full and part-time, permanent and temporary employees. If it is the Executive Headteacher who has a grievance then the Chair of Trustees is the person to whom the Executive Headteacher refers to as their immediate line manager at stage 2. If the Executive Headteacher's grievance is not resolved at that stage, the matter should be referred to stage 3. If individual Trustees are the subject of the grievance, such person/s shall not sit with the Appeal Committee but may attend the Trustees' Appeal Meeting to present their case.
- 2.6** This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.
- 2.7** An employee who is a member of a trade union may consult that trade union's representative before invoking the grievance procedure, but the employee should normally raise the problem personally with the immediate line manager before involving their trade union representative. Where a collective grievance is raised and all participants are members of the same trade union, the union representative can raise the grievance on their members' behalf should they all be in agreement. Where there are different unions representing each participant, they must nominate one union representative if, they cannot agree it must be dealt with as individual grievances.
- 2.8** Those responsible for dealing with employees' grievances will treat them seriously and attempt to resolve them as quickly as possible. There should be no attempt to block an employee's wish to raise the grievance at a higher level.
- 2.9** Employees should recognise that an investigation may be necessary which may delay the process beyond normal time limits.
- 2.10** At any stage of the procedure the Executive Headteacher and/or Trustees may refer to an adviser external to the school/Trust for guidance to bring about a resolution of the grievance acceptable to both sides outside the formal procedure. Such conciliation is without prejudice to the position of both parties in the procedure.
- 2.11** The Executive Headteacher and/or senior managers and/or Trustees may wish to take advice from the Trust's HR provider before considering a grievance.

3. Stages of the Grievance Procedure

3.1 Stage 1: Raising Grievances Informally

- 3.1.1** Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion. If an employee feels unable to speak to the person causing the grievance, then the employee should speak informally to their immediate line manager. If this does not resolve the issue, the employee should follow the formal procedure below.
- 3.1.2** If the employee's grievance is against the line manager personally, the grievance may be referred directly to Stage 2 but it would normally be reasonable to inform the line manager of this intention.

3.2 Stage 2: Formal Grievances

- 3.2.1** If the employee is not satisfied that their concerns have been addressed informally, the employee should submit the grievance in writing, indicating that it is a formal grievance, to the Executive Headteacher. The Employee should use the 'Notification of Grievance Form' (Appendix A) to state the grounds of their grievance and the remedy that is being sought. For collective grievances only one 'Notification of Grievance Form' should be filled out and agreed/signed by participating employees.
- 3.2.2** The Executive Headteacher, or nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team, will normally meet the employee to hear the grievance and reply as soon as possible, normally within 10 working days, even if it is only an interim reply pending further investigation. The Executive Headteacher, or nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team, may be accompanied by another employee, or the school's HR Adviser.
- 3.2.3** An employee may bring a Companion (see terms of reference) to any formal grievance meeting or appeal meeting under this Stage 2. An employee must tell the person holding the meeting who their chosen Companion is, in good time, before the meeting.
- 3.2.4** At any grievance meeting or appeal meeting, an employee's Companion may make representations and ask questions, but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf.
- 3.2.5** If an employee's chosen Companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, the employee will normally be required to find an alternative Companion.
- 3.2.6** 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 complaints and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the employee, any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents.
- 3.2.7** The employee must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing those handling the investigation of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents and attending interviews.
- 3.2.8** An investigation may be started before a grievance meeting is held where this is considered appropriate. In other cases a grievance meeting may be held before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. If appropriate and/or necessary, in those cases a further grievance meeting may be held with the employee after the investigation and before a decision is reached.

- 3.2.9** The Executive Headteacher will write to the employee, following the grievance meeting, to inform the employee of the outcome of the grievance and any further action that will be taken to resolve it.
- 3.2.10** If the employee raising the grievance is not satisfied with the outcome then the employee may appeal in accordance with Stage 3 below.

3.3 Stage 3: Grievance Appeal

- 3.3.1** If the grievance has not been resolved to the employee's satisfaction they may appeal in writing, to the Executive Headteacher where their grievance was heard by a Headteacher, or to the Clerk of Trustees, where their grievance was heard by the Executive Headteacher or Chair of Trustees, setting out the grounds of their appeal. This should be within 5 working days of receiving the written confirmation of the original decision. The employee must detail how they consider the grievance procedure has not been correctly applied, and/or how the outcome was not reasonable or proportionate.
- 3.3.2** The appeal will be heard as soon as possible after receipt of the appeal letter, by the Executive Headteacher where the original appeal was heard by a Headteacher, or an Appeal Committee of one or more Trustees where their grievance was heard by the Executive Headteacher or Chair of Trustees.
- 3.3.3** The Appeal Committee may have an HR adviser attend the meeting who may also be involved in its private deliberations. The HR adviser, who should not have had any previous involvement in dealing with the grievance, shall not have a vote in the decision of the Appeal Committee.
- 3.3.4** The Appeal Committee will confirm its final decision in writing, as soon as reasonably possible after the appeal meeting. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further right of appeal.

Appendix A

Employee's Notification of Grievance

This form should be used to submit a grievance in accordance with Stage 2 of the formal Grievance Procedure, adopted by West Norfolk Academies Trust.

Send the completed Employee's Notification of Grievance Form (Appendix A) to the Executive Headteacher. If your grievance relates to the Executive Headteacher, or you are the Executive Headteacher, then send it to the Chair of Trustees (or other Trustees if the grievance is against the Chair).

You are advised to keep a copy. Please be aware that the information will, in normal circumstances, be shared with any person/s complained about.

Name/s	
Post/s held:	
The nature of your grievance. Please include all relevant facts, dates and names of people involved and any witnesses. (continue on a separate page if necessary)	
When did you first raise your grievance, and with whom? Is this a one-off issue or part of a chain of events?	

What action has been taken on your grievance at the informal stage (stage 1)?
What steps or action do you want to be taken as a remedy for your grievance?

If you are a member, have you informed your trade union or professional association representative?

YES/NO

If yes: do you wish the representative to receive correspondence? YES/NO

If yes: please identify the representative and provide email and postal addresses and telephone number:

Representative name:	
Representative email:	
Representative address:	
Representative phone number:	

Printed name:	
Signed:	
Date:	