



Grievance Policy

1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. SCOPE	2
3. AIMS OF THE POLICY	3
4. KEY PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS.....	3
4.1 Grievances.....	3
4.2 Confidentiality.....	4
4.3 Right of Representation.....	4
5. KEY CONSIDERATIONS	5
6. POLICY STAGES	6
6.1 Informal stage.....	6
6.2 Outcome of informal stage.....	7
6.3 Formal stage.....	7
6.4 Appeal.....	8
7. REPORTING A CONCERN OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT.....	9
8. INVESTIGATION.....	10
9. WITHDRAWING A COMPLAINT	10
10. RECURRENT GRIEVANCES	11
11. SUPPORT.....	11
12. LINKED OR OVERLAPPING POLICIES.....	11
13. GOVERNANCE.....	11
Appendix 1 Collective Grievance procedure.....	12
Appendix 2 Grievance Referral form.....	13

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HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

Our Trust's Grievance Policy

We write our policies through a particular lens – that these documents are vital underpinning for our Trust to be one Trust. References to “you” are intended to explain the role you, the employee, have in our Trust and references to “we” refer to the responsibilities we recognise HISP has as an employer. Together we are One Trust.

This policy supports *Equity* and *Courage* by giving all staff a clear, fair process to raise concerns and be heard. It contributes to a culture of *Excellence*, *Sustainability*, and *Pupils First* by promoting respectful, open communication and a positive working environment where staff can thrive and focus on pupils' success.

1. Introduction

We believe that all employees should be treated fairly and with respect. The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that, if you feel aggrieved about the way you have been treated, you are given an opportunity to have your grievance heard and where possible resolved. You are encouraged to raise any concerns you have informally and at the earliest possible opportunity to aid prompt and easier resolution. Where it has not been possible to resolve a concern informally, or where a matter is not appropriate for informal resolution, the issue should be raised through the formal procedure.

This procedure seeks at all stages to identify possible ways of resolving your concerns. This should be in consultation with you and your manager and in line with current policy and working practices and should be conducted sensitively and confidentially. Mediation and conciliation, including the use of external conciliation, should be considered at all stages of this procedure and discussed with the relevant parties as appropriate.

This procedure does not form part of your contractual terms and conditions and any links within this document to other documents are for ease of use and do not form part of this procedure.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:	Teachers including leadership, upper pay range, main pay range and unqualified
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HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

	• Support staff • Employees who are in their probationary period • Teachers in their statutory induction period
This policy does not apply to:	• Volunteers • Contractors • Agency workers

3. Aims of Policy

This procedure provides a process whereby:

- Grievances may be resolved as close as possible to where they arise;
- Issues can be brought “out in the open” so that they can be considered by the relevant manager in the school/Trust unit;
- The individual employee and the school/Trust unit can be reconciled in an open and expeditious manner;
- Confidence and trust between individual employees and their senior leader is maintained.

4. Key Principles and Definitions

4.1 Grievance

A grievance is a concern, problem or complaint regarding the way in which you feel you have been treated by the Trust or managers acting on behalf of the Trust.

Grievances may be concerned with a wide range of issues, including work allocation, working environments and conditions, opportunities for career development or the way you, as the employee, have been managed.

Where a grievance is raised whilst a disciplinary process is in progress, we may choose any of these three options:

- Pause the existing disciplinary process whilst we investigate the grievance
- Deal with the existing disciplinary process at the same time as the grievance, as part of the same overall process
- Deal with the existing disciplinary process at the same time as the grievance but run two independent processes concurrently.

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

Where a grievance involves historic events or raises multiple issues, the scope and terms of reference for any investigation will be determined by us to ensure the process remains reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances. This may mean that not all historic issues are investigated in depth if it would not be reasonable or practical to do so.

Where a grievance investigation overlaps with school holiday periods, including the summer break, we may continue to progress the investigation to ensure a timely and proportionate resolution. While reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the availability of all parties, the process will not automatically be suspended during holiday periods unless there are exceptional circumstances requiring a pause.

When making our decision on this, we will consider the most appropriate course of action in each case and the need to act without delay. The decision will be made by the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/HISP Unit Leader ("senior leader") in consultation with the One Trust Services People team contact and the decision will be communicated to you.

This procedure does not apply to the following matters for which other procedures have been agreed. This includes:

- Collective disputes in respect of negotiation or consultation
- Salary grading reviews
- Selection for redundancy

A procedure for handling collective grievances can be found at Appendix 1.

4.2 Confidentiality

It is expected that all parties involved in the grievance process will maintain confidentiality as appropriate. This is both within and outside of the Trust (and includes all forms of social media).

If any party does not maintain confidentiality further action may be taken under the Disciplinary policy.

4.3 Right of Representation

You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at all meetings or hearings under this procedure.

While there is no statutory right to be accompanied at informal meetings by a Trade Union representative or a colleague employed by the Trust this will not be unreasonably refused if you request it.

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

Where there is a statutory right to be accompanied and your chosen companion is unavailable on the day scheduled for the meetings or appeal hearing, the meeting will be rescheduled once, provided that an alternative date is agreed within 5 working days of the scheduled date.

A companion may present your case, sum up, respond on your behalf to any views expressed and confer with you during the meeting but they may not answer questions on your behalf.

5. Key Considerations

1. All grievances will be examined carefully, whether or not the grievance is presented in writing, and be dealt with as quickly as possible. However, formal grievances under the grievance procedure should be submitted in writing, ideally using the grievance referral form attached to this document.
2. Grievances are as much about your feelings and emotions as they are about a set of facts. A grievance is unlikely to be “resolved” by any process that simply determines whether the aggrieved is right or wrong.
3. It will be important for the process to address the specific grievance, provide an opportunity for you to express your feelings, be listened to and have your feelings acknowledged. It is unlikely that any compromise solution will be achieved until these feelings have been expressed.
4. Whilst disputes between fellow employees (i.e. those who are not in a line management relationship) fall within the definition of a grievance, they are often best resolved through conciliation. If at any stage, a senior leader believes a case could be resolved through conciliation, this will be subject to the agreement of the parties involved.
5. The grievance procedure cannot be used to circumvent the consideration of legitimate management action on matters of discipline, attendance or capability where other policies will apply.
6. For grievances that are lodged whilst you are still employed by the Trust, and where the process continues following your exit from the school, this procedure will be followed.
7. If a grievance is raised by you when you are no longer employed by the Trust, you should set out the grievance in writing no later than 3 weeks after your employment ended. The grievance will be investigated and a written response to the grievance will be given to you.

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

8. Normally, where a grievance has been received more than 3 weeks after the employment has ended, the Trust is under no obligation to respond.
9. As a former employee, you will not normally have a right of appeal beyond any written response, where this has been provided by a school.
10. If you raise a concern but later delay (for example in providing further information) or decide not to take it forward, we may still investigate the matter if we believe it is necessary to do so to protect staff, pupils, or the organisation.

6. Policy Stages

6.1 Informal stage

You are encouraged wherever possible to discuss issues initially with your manager at the earliest opportunity. It is then envisaged that most grievances can be dealt with at the informal stage and all parties are expected to make use of this stage of the procedure.

You should normally first raise the issue(s) informally with your manager. This can be submitted verbally, via email or in writing. You should make it clear in any correspondence that the grievance is being raised at an informal level. If you are a senior leader and have a grievance, you should raise your grievance with your Executive Team leader.

If the grievance relates to your senior leader and you feel unable to discuss the matter with another senior member of the School/HISP unit or a member of the One Trust Services People team it may then be appropriate for you to raise your grievance with the Chair of the Academy Committee.

If you believe there are exceptional circumstances, you may lodge a formal grievance without using the informal stage.

Initially managers are expected to handle informal grievances. If your grievance relates directly to your manager, you should raise the issue informally with your manager's manager or senior leader.

If a number of employees are raising similar concerns, the Collective Grievance Procedure contained in Appendix One of this document should be followed.

There is no statutory right to be accompanied at the informal meeting. However, you may seek advice from your professional association or trade union representative and any request to be accompanied will not be unreasonably refused.

The relevant manager should arrange to meet with you as soon as practicable after the complaint is raised but normally within 7 working days. At this meeting the nature

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

of the grievance should be discussed and any other relevant information that may allow the grievance to be resolved at this informal stage.

Further investigation may be needed to resolve the grievance at this informal stage.

6.2 Outcome of informal stage

- Possible outcomes at the informal stage may include, but are not limited to, conciliation, informal discussion with all parties, identified training or specific supervision.
- There should be a written record of the discussions and outcome at the informal stage.
- The outcome of the informal meeting will be shared verbally with you, as the 'grievant'. This should include details of the next stage of the procedure if you feel that the informal stage has not satisfactorily resolved your grievance.

6.3 Formal stage

If it has not been possible, or not appropriate, to resolve your complaint through the informal process you must put your grievance in writing. The completed grievance form (at Appendix 2) should be dated and sent to your manager, copying in your local HR contact and HR@hispmat.org. You should include as much detail as possible to assist with resolution of the grievance including:

- the facts of the complaint (reason(s), dates, who is involved);
- how the issue(s) have arisen;
- what outcome (s) you are seeking;
- how you believe a resolution can be best achieved;
- any other relevant information.

Where your manager is the subject of the complaint, and it is not appropriate for them to deal with the matter, your grievance should be sent to your manager's manager or senior leader, copying in your local HR contact and HR@hispmat.org.

On receipt of the formal grievance, a decision will be made about who is best placed to manage the complaint. The responsible manager will consider what, if any investigation may be necessary to establish the facts of the situation and will consult with the One Trust Services People team. The manager may need to gather information such as policies or procedures and may need speak to other relevant individuals.

The responsible manager (or a nominated panel of two senior leaders with no previous involvement) will arrange to meet with you as soon as practical and usually within 10 working days. The meeting will be to understand the complaint in more detail and consider what action could be taken to resolve the matter.

Where appropriate the meeting may need to be adjourned to allow further investigations to take place. The responsible manager (or nominated panel) may

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

decide to commission an independent investigation, rather than investigating themselves. Further details are set out in section 8. Once complete, you will be invited, with at least 5 days' notice in writing, to a formal grievance meeting and will receive a copy of the investigation report and related materials.

At the formal grievance meeting the panel will consider the report and allow you to make any representations. At the meeting, you will be given the opportunity to explain your grievance and how you believe it should be resolved, to the grievance panel.

You have a statutory right to be accompanied by a companion at a grievance meeting. The companion must be a work colleague, trade union official, or trade union representative who has been certified as being competent to attend such meetings.

You must let the responsible manager or named caseworker know if you want to be accompanied. If the chosen companion will not be available on the initial date and time proposed for the formal meeting, we will move the meeting to an alternative time proposed by you, provided that the alternative time is both reasonable and no more than 5 working days after the date originally proposed. If you wish to present any further material to the panel, we will need this submitted at least 2 days before the panel.

The companion may address the hearing to put and sum up your case, respond on your behalf to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with you during the hearing. Your companion may not answer questions on your behalf, address the hearing if you do not wish it or prevent us from explaining our case.

Possible outcomes at the formal stage may include, but are not limited to, conciliation, informal discussion with all parties, identified training or supervisory needs.

Following the meeting, you will be informed of the outcome and any action that we propose to take because of the complaint. This will be confirmed in writing, usually within 10 working days of the meeting.

6.4 Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you should write to the whoever sent you the outcome letter, copying in the People team caseworker, within 10 working days of receipt of the confirmation letter stating the grounds of your appeal.

An appeal hearing will be arranged as soon as practical – ideally within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal letter but this will depend on the availability of panel members and whether further investigation is necessary.

The appeal will be heard by a panel of two individuals neither of whom have been previously involved. In exceptional circumstances, the panel may proceed with 3 panel members.

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

The panel will consider the grounds of appeal, the facts of the situation and assess whether or not the conclusion reached and actions taken as an outcome of the grievance were appropriate in the circumstances. To do this they will consider:

- Any information gathered as part of the investigation and meeting(s) with you
- Any further investigation material
- Your representations
- Whether there is anyone else they need to speak to
- If there is any other information that they need

Following the meeting, you will be informed of the outcome and any action that the we propose to take because of the complaint, although due to confidentiality we may not be able to give you full details of what action is being taken in relation to other parties involved. The appeal outcome will be confirmed in writing usually within 10 working days of the appeal meeting.

The outcome of the appeal stage will be final.

7. Reporting a concern of bullying or harassment

Grievances involving allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination or protected disclosures require particular sensitivity in the way they are handled. Allegations of this nature are treated seriously and thoroughly investigated. Any complaints by you of a bullying or harassment nature should, with your agreement, be pursued initially with reference to our Dignity at Work policy and its associated procedures.

Following an initial investigation, the relevant manager will need to determine whether the alleged behaviour may constitute misconduct. In such cases it would be appropriate to conduct a disciplinary investigation rather than pursuing the matter via the grievance procedure.

If you believe you may be the victim of bullying or harassment you should normally take the following steps prior to submitting a written complaint;

- discuss your concerns with your manager (or a more senior manager if your concerns are about your immediate manager), a professional association or trade union representative, or a work colleague;
- keep a record of any incidents that occur, noting dates, times, circumstances and witnesses (if any);
- ask the person(s) involved to stop whatever they are doing which is upsetting or unpleasant, as they may be unaware of their actions. You may want to do this with the support of a colleague or professional association/trade union representative;

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

- advise your manager (or a more senior manager if your concerns are about your manager) as soon as it becomes apparent that the unacceptable behaviour is continuing.

Where the above steps prove ineffective or where you wish to submit your complaint in writing, the written complaint should be sent to your manager, or a more senior manager if your concerns are about your manager, as promptly as possible, copying in your local HR contact. The grievance referral form (Appendix Two) should be used wherever possible. In the alternative, your complaint should include sufficient detail to assist with resolution.

8. Investigations

When you raise a grievance, either under the Informal Stage or formally under Stage 1 of this procedure, the relevant manager may consider that further investigation is required. It is for the relevant manager to determine how such investigations should be conducted.

Where necessary, an investigating officer (IO) can be assigned to undertake the investigation or the relevant manager may conduct the investigation themselves. It may be deemed appropriate to use an external IO (e.g. an officer from the Local Authority or independent HR consultant). Normally this would be approved by the One Trust Services People team.

The investigation may require the relevant manager or IO to:

- meet with you to gather further evidence
- gather any further information they feel is relevant in as confidential a manner as possible;
- meet with the other relevant parties to discuss the grievance and obtain relevant information or request written responses from any other party they consider appropriate;
- produce an investigation report to capture the key issues and findings arising from the investigation and make their recommendations;
- be impartial and unconnected with the grievance.

Investigations should be undertaken in a timely manner and should avoid unnecessary delay. A reasonable timescale would normally be not more than 15 working days except in respect of exceptional or complex cases. You should be advised of the likely timescale for the completion of the investigation.

9. Withdrawing a complaint

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

It is up to you whether or not you wish to pursue a grievance. If you do retract a complaint, this must be confirmed in writing, copying in your local HR contact. We will consider whether any of the issues raised should still be followed up and need to be addressed using appropriate policies and procedures to do so.

We will also seek to establish the reason why the complaint has been withdrawn. Should this be due to your concerns that you may be subject to intimidation or less favourable treatment, we will discuss with you whether there are steps that could be taken to enable you to feel you can continue with your grievance.

We will deal with any intimidation resulting from the raising of a grievance as a serious disciplinary issue.

10. Recurrent Grievances

If an issue has already been fully and properly addressed through the grievance procedure, and any agreed resolutions have been actioned, it is not open to you to restart the procedure in respect of the same issue. However, we will take care to ensure that any new issues that have emerged, since the original procedure was initiated, are properly addressed.

11. Support

If you feel you need additional support, you may wish to contact the employee wellbeing support offered to all HISP MAT employees provided by Schools Advisory Service (SAS). This is a free, impartial and confidential platform that offers a diverse range of support to employees designed to help you across a wide range of areas related to your work life or personal life (details included). All enquiries are answered by qualified and experienced professionals; you can contact them on 01773814400 at any time, online at <https://schooladvice.co.uk>, or there is an app you can download.

12. Linked/overlapping policies

Reference should be made, as appropriate, to our Dignity at Work policy.

13. Governance

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

This policy will be administered by the One Trust Services People team and initially will be subject to review every three years unless there is an earlier statutory change and/or significant feedback necessitating an earlier review. Any feedback on the policy should be emailed to HR@hispmat.org.

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

Appendix 1 - Collective Grievance Procedure (excluding formal disputes)

Where a grievance is received on behalf of a group of employees – collective grievance - individual(s) will be identified from within the group of employees who have raised the grievance, to act on behalf of the group at any formal meeting held. A representative of a recognised professional association/trade union may raise a grievance on behalf of two or more members.

The collective grievance procedure will mirror that of an individual grievance as follows;

- **Informal Stage** Informal grievance raised with line manager
- **Stage 1 Formal Grievance** Formal grievance raised with manager or manager's manager and heard by a panel
- **Stage 2 Appeal** Appeal raised with appeals panel

The employee(s) have the right to be accompanied at all formal stages of the grievance procedure. Where members of the group who have lodged the grievance belong to different professional associations or trade unions, it may be appropriate to allow more than one representative to accompany these individuals at the formal stages of the procedure.

Those arranging the hearing of the grievance will ensure that the nominated spokesperson(s) are accepted by the larger aggrieved group and that the group has access to any information concerning formal meetings, as well as the outcomes.

HISP Multi Academy Trust

Grievance Policy

APPENDIX 2 – FORMAL GRIEVANCE REFERRAL FORM at: [Formal Grievance Panel Referral form June 2025](#)