



Grievance Policy

For the Academies within TAMAT

This Grievance Policy was approved and adopted by the Trust Board: Spr 2025
It will be reviewed: Spr 2026

1. Statement of Intent

The Trust Board recognises that employees may from time to time have concerns about matters relating to work which they wish to have addressed, whether on an informal or formal basis.

In particular, the Trust Board is committed to:

- Fostering good working relationships between managers and employees and a climate where employees feel able to raise concerns relating to their employment;
- Ensuring that grievances are addressed promptly and informally where possible;
- Encouraging responsible use of the procedure and addressing malicious or vexatious grievances about colleagues robustly.

2. Introduction and Purpose of Procedure

The purpose of the Grievance Procedure is to provide a framework for the quick and effective resolution of problems or concerns that may arise in the workplace. The aim is to ensure that employees with a grievance are given the opportunity to have their concerns heard and, where possible, to secure a mutually acceptable resolution.

The Trust Board is mindful of its obligations under the legal framework which includes but not limited to:

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Act 2002
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Acas (2015) 'Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures'

This procedure will be applied fairly and consistently to all employees. The Trust Board and those with line management responsibility will give due consideration to any concerns about equality or discrimination that may be raised and will seek additional advice on such matters as necessary.

The Trust Board has a separate procedure to manage complaints about bullying and harassment and such concerns will be addressed initially in accordance with that procedure.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effectiveness of this Policy by monitoring and reviewing in annually.
- Ensuring no member of staff of discriminated against, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The Local Academy Board (or in cases for the Central Team, the Trust Board) is responsible for:

- Assuming the Headteacher's/CEO's responsibilities, where a grievance is in relation to the Headteacher/CEO.
- Determining the outcome of a grievance appeal.
- Handling any incidents of malicious grievance reporting.
- Handling any disciplinary actions following a grievance being raised.

The Chair of Governors/Trustees is responsible for:

- Assuming the role of Investigating Officer if the grievance is against the Headteacher/CEO.

The Headteacher/CEO is responsible for:

- Ensuring that those with Line Management responsibilities are suitably skilled to handle grievances appropriately. The Headteacher/CEO will also hear grievances in his/her capacity as a Line Manager and, in some cases, where the employee does not feel able to raise concerns with his/her own Line Manager.
- Ensuring all members of staff read and understand the provisions in the policy.
- Handling any grievances that are brought to their attention.
- Appointing an impartial Grievance Officer (from the TAMAT Central Team), who assists the Headteacher in handling any grievances.
- Working with the Grievance Officer to resolve any grievances as appropriate.
- Assess information during grievance meetings and investigations and assisting the Grievance Officer in determining the best course of action.
- Writing and delivering grievance outcome letters.
- Ensuring all Line Managers treat grievances seriously, ensuring enough time and priority is allocated to addressing the issue.

The Clerk to Governors is responsible for:

- Keeping up to date with training needs for handling grievances.
- Forming an appeal panel, where necessary.

Line Managers are responsible for:

- Monitoring the working environments of colleagues to identify any conflicts.
- Promoting positive working environments.
- Managing informal stages of the grievance procedure.
- Working with the Grievance Officer and Headteacher to investigate any grievances within their department.

The Grievance Officer is responsible for:

- Resolving employees' formal grievances promptly.
- Assisting with the grievance investigation.
- Presenting information at grievance meetings and during any appeal hearings.
- Making any reasonable adjustments to ensure employees are able to attend meetings.
- Remaining unbiased and listening to all sides of the grievance to uncover the truth.
- Appointing an impartial Investigation Officer.
- Being a witness at appeal hearings.
- Determining what the grievance outcome will be – unless the grievance goes to an appeal, in which case the LAB is responsible.

The Investigation Officer is responsible for:

- Investigating the facts of a grievance, as directed by the Grievance Officer and Headteacher.
- Providing evidence at grievance meetings.
- Standing as a witness during any appeal hearings.

Employees are responsible for:

- Employees are expected to raise concerns without undue delay and to seek, where possible, to resolve matters informally in the first instance.
- Submitting formal grievances in writing to the Grievance Officer within four months using the Employee Grievance Form.
- Ensuring any grievances that they raise are truthful and fair.

4. Addressing the Grievance Informally

4.1 Raising the Grievance

Where possible, employees should first seek to resolve their grievance informally and at an early opportunity; employees who are members of a union may find it useful to seek initial advice from their union at this stage. Employees are expected to raise concerns within no more than a four-month period following the act or decision complained of or show good reason for a longer delay.

If the employee's grievance relates to a colleague, he/she should normally attempt to raise and resolve the grievance directly with that individual. Where this is not possible, and for all other cases, the employee should raise the concerns with his/her Line Manager in the first instance. The Line Manager will then arrange for an informal meeting to discuss the matters raised, with a view to achieving a satisfactory outcome.

Where the grievance involves the employee's Line Manager, or in cases where the employee is not comfortable with raising the matter with his/her Line Manager, the employee should take their concern to the next most senior Manager or the Headteacher who will either meet with the employee informally or identify another appropriate person to address the grievance.

Concerns which in some way relate to the actions of the Headteacher should be taken to the Chair of the Local Academy Board who will nominate a member of the Board to address the grievance.

If the Headteacher/CEO has a grievance, he/she should inform the Chair of the Local Academy Board/Trust Board in the first instance, who will either seek to resolve the grievance him/herself or identify another governor/trustee to do so, where this is more appropriate.

If the manager, upon hearing the nature of the complaint, believes that it is more appropriately addressed by the Trust Board, he/she will advise the employee accordingly and provide a copy of the appropriate procedure.

4.2 Initial Grievance Meeting

The purpose of meeting informally to discuss the employee's grievance is for the manager to clarify the exact nature of the grievance and what reasonable outcomes the employee is seeking in order to resolve the matter.

Where third parties are involved, the line manager will use the initial meeting to gather relevant facts. It may then be necessary to adjourn the meeting to allow for further investigation and to interview other parties.

The manager will conclude any necessary further investigation and then follow up with the employee, explaining their findings and any action to be taken as a result. The manager will also explain that, if the employee remains dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she may raise the matter as a formal grievance within 10 school working days. The manager will keep a brief written record of the informal grievance, the outcomes and

any agreed action. This will remain confidential to the manager and will only be shared with the employee and other relevant parties.

5. Addressing the Grievance Formally

5.1 Grievance Hearing - Formal Stage

Where informal attempts to resolve a grievance have been unsuccessful, the employee may consider formalising their grievance by putting it in writing. He/she may wish to seek advice from his/her Union Representative on how best to take the matter forward. The formal grievance must be presented to the Headteacher/CEO (or the Chair of the Local Academy Board/Trustees if the grievance relates to the Headteacher/CEO) within 10 school working days of the employee's last involvement with the informal stage (this will usually be when he/she was informed of the outcome of the informal grievance). Formal grievances received after this time may still be considered if the Manager hearing the case is satisfied that there are valid reasons for the employee's delay.

The written grievance should include the following:

- The fact that the employee intends the matter to be raised as a formal grievance;
- A detailed account of the concern/complaint(s), including dates when any incident(s) took place and the names of any other people who may have been involved;
- A summary of what took place during the informal stage, who dealt with the complaint and why he/she was not satisfied with the outcome.
- What resolution the employee is seeking by making the formal grievance.
- Any supporting documentation which the employee wishes to be considered.

A template to complete is provided as Appendix 1 at the end of this Policy if the employee prefers to use a standard format.

It is particularly important that the employee identifies what resolution (or options for resolution) he/she would deem to be acceptable. If a resolution is not identified, the employee may be asked to give the matter further consideration before the grievance is taken further.

An employee may wish to seek assistance with drafting the letter from a work colleague or Trade Union Representative. An employee with a disability which affects their ability to put the grievance in writing should also inform their Line Manager or the Headteacher who will consider what reasonable adjustments can be put in place.

5.2 Grievance Investigation

The Grievance Officer will conduct one of the following two investigations:

- A fact checking investigation
- A full investigation

The Grievance Officer will determine which type of investigation is required on a case-by-case basis. Following the initial formal meeting the Grievance Officer may need to conduct a fact checking investigation before resolving the grievance. Fact checking investigations will be conducted in a professional, timely and non-intrusive manner. These investigations may involve interviews with Line Managers and email searches.

For full investigations, the Grievance Officer will:

- Appoint a suitably independent and senior member of staff e.g. the Head of HR, or the Chair of Governors/Trustees to be the Investigation Officer within five working days.
- Assist the Investigation Officer as far as they can without interfering with the investigation.

During full investigations, the Investigation Officer will:

- Aim to conclude their investigation within 15 school working days.
- Interview the employee concerned, plus other employees whose information may have a bearing on the case.
- Present their findings in writing to the Grievance Officer, who will provide a copy to all employees involved.

The Investigation Officer will not be responsible for determining the outcome of the grievance, this responsibility will lie with the Grievance Officer and Headteacher.

6. Grievance Outcome

Once the investigation report has been received, the Grievance Officer will call a grievance meeting to which the employees concerned, and their companions will be invited. At this meeting, employees will be given an opportunity to answer any questions that arose from the investigation.

At the grievance meeting, the Grievance Officer may decide to invite witnesses, e.g. the Investigation Officer to answer questions. The Grievance Officer and the employees concerned will be permitted to ask witnesses questions. Employees will also be permitted to invite witnesses to this meeting.

Once all the information has been presented, the Grievance Officer will adjourn the meeting to make their decision. The Grievance Officer will consider each side of the grievance and make a decision – this will be recorded in the outcome letter. The outcomes possible following a grievance are as follows:

- The grievance is upheld in full
- The grievance is rejected in full
- The grievance is partially upheld, e.g. there is validity to some of the grievance
- Mediation

A 'partially upheld' outcome will not be used as an outcome when a decision cannot be reached. Sometimes, mediation will be used as an outcome. This will involve all parties collaborating to find an acceptable outcome.

The Grievance Officer will write an outcome letter within five working days and provide a copy of this to the employee. The letter will include information on:

- The chosen outcome
- Reasons for the decision
- Any facts that the Grievance Officer has ascertained in coming to their decision.
- Any recommendations or agreed actions to take.
- The employee's right to appeal the decision.

If it is necessary and appropriate to take disciplinary action, the Grievance Officer, Headteacher and Local Academy Board will meet to determine what action is appropriate in line with the Disciplinary Policy. Disciplinary action will be proportionate and may include but not limited to:

- Re-training
- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Suspension with pay
- Termination of employment

Gross misconduct will result in the employee's contract of employment being terminated. If an employee has already received a written warning, suspension with pay may be considered.

Where a grievance is raised against an employee during a disciplinary process, the disciplinary process may be suspended to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related, the Grievance Officer will deal with both issues concurrently.

7. Appeals

There shall be a right of appeal against the outcome of any grievance which has been raised under the formal stage of the procedure. In exercising this right, the employee must confirm the grounds on which he/she is making the appeal. If the appeal letter does not contain this information, the employee will be asked for further particulars before the appeal hearing takes place.

Where employees wish to appeal the outcome of a grievance, they are entitled to do so within 10 school working days of receiving the outcome letter.

Appeals will be heard by the Headteacher/CEO or one or more governors/Trustees, in accordance with the scheme of delegation in place and bearing in mind the need to secure impartiality at every stage of the process. No person will hear an appeal against his/her own decision. Appeals against grievances which have been heard by a governor/trustee will always be heard by one or more governors/trustees with delegated powers. References to the Appeals Panel hereafter may therefore be interpreted accordingly, although the 'panel' could in some cases consist of one person.

To raise an appeal, employees will complete the Grievance Appeal Form (Appendix 2) and explain why they are dissatisfied with the outcome – this form will be given to the Clerk to the Local Academy Board/Trustees. The Clerk will:

- Acknowledge receiving the form, within 5 school working days.
- Arrange an appeal meeting within 10 school working days.
- Invite the Grievance officer and Investigation Officer to the meeting.

The employee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by either a work colleague or trade union representative.

The appeal panel will decide which Governor will be the Chairperson and who will take notes. This process will be formally minuted by the Clerk to the Local Academy/Trust Board. The Appeal Panel will review the paperwork and interview any relevant witnesses before making their decision.

The employee will:

- Be given the opportunity to explain their case at the meeting.
- Be permitted to bring a companion.
- Not introduce new grounds for raising their concern.

The purpose of the meeting is for the Appeals Panel to consider the grounds for appeal and to review the fairness of the outcome of the grievance. New evidence may be considered at the appeals stage but no additional grievances can be raised.

When the panel have heard all the information, including the rationale for the original judgement, they will make a decision on the outcome. Within 5 school working days of the appeal hearing taking place, the employee will be notified in writing of the outcome and any actions which have been determined. The panel's decision will be final. There is no further right of appeal.

8 Procedural Points & Specific Circumstances

8.1 Grievances relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The school has a zero-tolerance policy to any unlawful discrimination, bullying and harassment and victimisation of any staff, contractors, pupils and parents under its obligations to the Equality Act 2010. Any concerns or complaints relating to the above will be dealt with in accordance to the Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy and the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure. If an Equality Diversity & Inclusion concern or complaint is relating to a work practice or policy, this may be dealt with under this Grievance Policy and Procedure.

8.2 Collective Grievances

A 'collective grievance' for the purposes of this procedure is defined as a grievance put forward by two or more employees who have the same concerns or problems to raise, and who have agreed to raise these jointly rather than separately. Collective grievances are not used to consider issues which are already the subject of collective negotiation or consultation with recognised trade unions.

Collective grievances will be addressed in accordance with the general framework outlined in this procedure and there is therefore a presumption that efforts will be made initially to resolve the grievance on an informal basis.

Where the employees are trade union members, their trade union representative(s) may raise the grievance on the employees' behalf and act as their spokesperson. In so doing, he/she will need to identify the employees who are raising the grievance.

Where a collective grievance reaches the formal stage, there will in most cases be a single grievance hearing convened and a single outcome communicated to all. It may, however, be necessary to discuss with the employees and/or their spokesperson how the procedure will be managed as it may need to be adapted according to the circumstances and nature of the case.

Where employees do not agree to use the collective grievance process each grievance will be heard on an individual basis.

An appeal, conducted in accordance with section 6, will be convened when at least one employee who was party to the collective grievance seeks to exercise the right. Employees who are satisfied with the outcome of the grievance may choose to withdraw from the process at this stage.

7.3 Grievances Arising Post Employment

Grievances which are already under consideration before a member of staff leaves employment will usually be seen through to conclusion in accordance with the timescales and process outlined in this procedure unless the employee no longer wishes to engage with the process or there is clearly no purpose to be served in seeking to resolve the employee's complaint after he/she has left.

This procedure does not apply to grievances which are not raised until after the employee has left. Employees are expected to raise genuine concerns prior to employment ending. Concerns or complaints which are not raised until after employment has ended will be considered only on a discretionary basis, bearing in mind the nature of the concerns raised, the length of time since the employee left and any other relevant factors. The manager or governor assigned to consider the case may determine that the matter requires further investigation without necessarily treating the employee's concerns as a formal grievance.

9. Frivolous and Vexatious Grievances

The Trust Board expects all staff to act with honest intent when raising a grievance and will treat all genuine grievances seriously. Employees who raise concerns with vexatious or malicious intent may be subject to disciplinary action as a result.

Bullying, harassment, or victimisation will not be tolerated.

In order for a concern to be duly treated as a grievance, employees are expected to demonstrate that they have a substantive complaint, even if this may have arisen from a genuine misunderstanding of the matter in question. Repeated grievances which replicate the same matters already addressed under the procedure will not be reconsidered unless new evidence has come to light with justifies reopening the grievance.

All employees will be made aware of the schools Code of Conduct and act in accordance with it. All employees will adhere to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

8.2 The Role of Mediation

In seeking to resolve a grievance, it may sometimes be appropriate for mediation to be considered, depending on the nature of the grievance. A third-party mediator may be asked to discuss the issues with those involved and seek to facilitate a resolution. Mediation will only be used where all parties involved in the grievance have agreed to it.

8.3 Scheduling Formal Meetings

Meetings should be held during the employee's usual working day. Other arrangements can be made by mutual agreement. Closure periods will generally result in a temporary suspension of the procedure.

The employee is expected to make every effort to attend meetings at the required time. The relevant manager/governor will, where reasonably practicable, seek to liaise with the employee regarding the availability of his/her chosen work colleague or trade union representative to ensure that postponements are not necessary. If the employee's work colleague or trade union representative is unable to attend, an alternative date may be suggested by the employee. This will not be unreasonably declined provided it can be accommodated by those conducting the grievance meeting or appeal and does not result in an unacceptable delay. As a general rule, a delay of up to 5 school working days will be acceptable but each request will be considered on its own merits. Any subsequent postponements, or a failure of the employee to turn up to a scheduled meeting without good reason, is likely to result either in the grievance being decided on the basis of other available evidence or a decision that the grievance will not be given further consideration.

8.4 Ill-Health Absence

The Trust Board aims, through this procedure, to deal with all grievances with the minimum of delay, in the best interests of all parties. The ill-health absence of an employee during the procedure will not result in any delay to convening meetings or appeals beyond what is reasonable in the circumstances. One attempt to reschedule a grievance meeting or appeal will be made where ill-health absence intervenes and it should be explained to the employee that if he/she is still unable to attend on the rescheduled date the relevant manager/governor(s) will either:

- a) proceed to investigate the grievance (or consider the appeal) without meeting with the employee first, in which case the employee will be offered the option of making a written submission or asking his/her companion to attend the rescheduled meeting on his/her behalf, or,
- b) Where it is not practical to proceed with investigating the grievance or hearing the appeal without further clarification from the employee, inform the employee that

the grievance will not be pursued further at this time due to the employee's absence.

Absence which appears to have been triggered by the grievance itself will usually be referred immediately to Occupational Health to obtain advice. If the absence becomes long term then this will be dealt with in accordance with the Attendance Management Policy.

8.5 Data Protection

The School/Trust processes personal data collected during informal complaints and the formal grievance procedure in accordance with its data protection policy. The Headteacher, governors and any other manager involved with the operation of this procedure will ensure that any information relating to an employee's grievance is held securely, accessed by and disclosed only to those who have a direct involvement in dealing with or responding to the grievance, except in cases where disclosure may be a legal obligation or where there is a reporting duty to the local authority or other outside agencies.

In order to investigate a complaint or concern thoroughly, it will often be necessary to speak to members of staff or other people associated with the **school/trust**. Disclosure to individuals will be based on what they need to know in order to contribute effectively to the investigation, emphasising the need for strict confidentiality. If in doubt, the investigating manager will clarify with the employee what details will be disclosed in advance.

Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the **Trust's** disciplinary procedure.

8.6 Grievances Relating to Other Procedures

Grievances which relate directly to the instigation or operation of procedures to address disciplinary, capability or attendance concerns will be handled in accordance with the rights under those procedures to state a case and to appeal against any formal action taken.

9. Status of Policy and Review

The content and operation of this procedure is reviewed annually by the Trust Board. The Policy is discretionary and does not confer any contractual rights.

Appendix 1

Employee Grievance Form

Employees who wish to raise a formal grievance are required to complete this form and submit it to their Line Manager. If employees wish to raise a formal Grievance immediately, they should give this form to the Headteacher/CEO.

Please note: grievances should be raised within four months of the incident that led to the grievance.

This form is for formal grievances only. Please also provide a letter outlining:

- A brief description of the events that led to the grievance, including names and dates.
- An account of how the events made you feel.
- What actions you have taken to resolve the grievance.
- What outcomes you are hoping for.

Employee Details			
Name			
Job Title		Form Completion Date	
Grievance Details			
Does your grievance relate to another member of staff		Yes	No
If the grievance relates to your Line Manager, give this form to the Headteacher			
If the grievance relates to the Headteacher, give this form to the Chair of Local Academy Board			
Date of last incident relevant to grievance			
Please provide details of the grievance:			
Please detail any individuals involved:			
Please provide details of your preferred solution:			
Are you being supported by a colleague, trade union official or trade union representative		Yes	No
If yes please provide their name			

Appendix 2

Grievance Appeal Form

Please submit this form to the Clerk to the Local Academy Board within ten working days of receiving the grievance outcome letter.

Employee Details			
Name			
Job Title		Form Completion Date	
Grievance Appeal Details			
Date of grievance meeting			
Outcome of grievance meeting			
Please provide details of the grievance appeal			
Please provide details of your preferred solution			
Are you being supported by a colleague, trade union official or trade union representative?		Yes	No
If yes please provide their name			
Employee Signature			