

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Christ Church Cathedral School (the School) is committed to providing a harmonious working environment for its employees. The School acknowledges that grievances may arise from time to time. However, the School is committed to resolving any such grievances promptly and fairly and otherwise in accordance with the ACAS Code of Practice.

PROCEDURE

What is a Grievance?

Grievances are defined as concerns, problems or complaints. They can arise from a variety of sources.

Issues that may cause grievances include:

- terms and conditions of employment;
- health and safety;
- work relations;
- bullying and harassment;
- new working practices;
- working environment;
- organisational change; and
- discrimination.

Using the procedure

If the employee has any difficulty at any stage of the Grievance Procedure because of a disability, the employee should discuss the situation with their line manager or any member of the senior management team involved in hearing the grievance, as soon as possible.

Scope of this policy

This procedure should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. If the employee is dissatisfied with any disciplinary action, they should submit an appeal under the appropriate procedure.

Record keeping

Any grievances will be placed on the employee's personnel file along with a record of any decisions taken and any notes or other documents compiled during the grievance process. These will be processed in accordance with the School's data protection obligations.

Informal grievances

Where possible grievances should be resolved, without unreasonable delay, and informally between individuals, or within the department concerned. This may involve conducting informal meetings between the individuals concerned to discuss the problems that have arisen.

Employees are encouraged to raise the grievance orally and informally with any other person involved. If they feel unable to speak with their manager, they should speak informally with another manager of at least the same level of seniority.

An employee raising a grievance should always be asked if s/he wishes the matter to be dealt with formally or informally.

If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, the matter should be raised as a formal grievance in accordance with procedure set out below.

Formal grievances

If the employee has not been able to resolve a grievance informally the following procedure shall apply.

The employee shall submit details of their grievance in writing to the Deputy Head (or the Bursar for non-teaching staff), indicating that it is a formal grievance. If the employee is raising a grievance against the Deputy Head or the Bursar the Employee shall submit their grievance to another member of the Senior Management Team.

The written grievance should contain a brief description of the nature of the employee's complaint, including any relevant facts, dates and names of individuals involved.

Investigations

In some cases it may be necessary for the School to carry out an investigation into the employee's grievance. The Deputy Head/Bursar will usually act as the investigating officer.

The amount of investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve taking witness statements from the employee and any witnesses and/or reviewing relevant documents.

All staff must cooperate fully and promptly in any investigation.

Grievance meeting

The School will arrange a meeting as soon as reasonably practicable after the investigation is complete. The meeting will usually be conducted by the Headmaster. Where a grievance is brought against the Headmaster, a suitable alternative person will be appointed to conduct the grievance meeting.

The employee (complainant) shall be entitled to be accompanied at any grievance meeting by a trade union representative or colleague. If the employee's choice of companion is unreasonable (for example if there may be a conflict of interest) the School may request that the employee choose someone else.

The employee and their companion should make every effort to attend grievance meetings. If the employee or the employee's companion cannot attend at the time specified, the employee should notify the School as soon as possible. The School will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

The purpose of the grievance meeting is to enable the employee to explain their grievance and how they think it should be resolved. This information assists the School in reaching a decision based on the available evidence.

The employee's representative may make representations to the School and ask questions but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf. The employee may confer privately with his/her companion during the grievance meeting.

After an initial grievance meeting the School may carry out further grievance meetings as we consider appropriate. Such meetings will be arranged without unreasonably delay.

The Outcome

The School will write to the employee as soon as reasonably practicable after the conclusion of the final grievance meeting to inform the employee of the outcome of their grievance and any further action that the School may take to resolve the grievance.

The employee will be reminded of their right to appeal. Where appropriate, the School will endeavour to also give the employee this information in person.

Appeals

If the grievance has not been resolved to the employee's satisfaction they may appeal in writing to the Headmaster, stating their full grounds of appeal, within 5 working days of the date on which the decision was sent or given to the employee.

The School will hold an appeal meeting, as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt of the employee's appeal.

The appeal will be dealt with impartially by the Vice Chairman of Governors (the Sub Dean) and a panel appointed by him of two or more individuals who may or may not be Governors and who will not have previously been involved in the matter. The employee may bring a companion (as above) to the appeal meeting.

The School will confirm its final decision in writing as soon as reasonably practicable after the appeal hearing.

The decision of the appeals officer is final. There shall be no further right of appeal.

Mediation

Depending on the nature of the grievance, the School may suggest mediation as an effective method of resolving a complaint.

Reviewed by SMT 31 August 2015