The Parkside School
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The Parkside School
Staff Discipline Conduct & Grievance Procedure

Approved by:	Mr Paul Stanley Chair of Governors	**Date:** November 2025
Signed:		
Next review due: **by:**	November 2026 Mrs Carolyn Ellis-Gage Head Teacher	

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1. THE INFORMAL PROCEDURE AND MEDIATION

1.1 If an employee has a grievance to do with work, or with the people they work with, there should be a first attempt to resolve the issue by making a direct approach to the other person involved. In many cases, it is possible for an employee to make direct contact, to make someone aware of a problem and to agree a solution informally.

If the employee cannot resolve the matter through this approach, the next step is to raise it with their immediate line manager, through an informal meeting at which any concerns are raised and examined through discussion. The employee can be accompanied or represented at this meeting by a companion (a work colleague or trade union representative).

1.2 At that meeting, the employee should clearly outline their own view of the problem and explain to the manager what they consider to be a suitable resolution to the matter. After the informal meeting, the manager should give a reply, verbally, as soon as possible. The initial response will be given within five working days but further discussion may be needed to resolve the problem.

In some circumstances, the immediate line manager does not have the authority to resolve the grievance and they may need to refer it directly to the Head Teacher. Flexibility around timescales is often appropriate when trying to resolve informal grievances, particularly where it concerns interpersonal conflict between two or more employees.

1.3 If the employee is not satisfied with the manager's reply, or if they feel unable to talk to the immediate line manager, then they should talk to the Head Teacher. If the grievance relates to the Head Teacher and the employee is not satisfied with the Head Teacher's reply, or if the employee feels unable to discuss it with the Head Teacher, then the employee should discuss the grievance with the Chair of Governors.

1.4 If the grievance is against the Head Teacher the word 'Head Teacher' should be replaced by 'Chair of Governors' throughout the remainder of this section.

1.5 If an employee other than the Head Teacher has a grievance against a governor, the employee should raise the matter initially with the Head Teacher who will discuss it with the Chair of Governors and agree a mechanism for informal resolution. If an employee has a grievance against the Chair of Governors, the employee should initially raise it with the Head Teacher, who will seek to agree a mechanism for informal resolution, taking advice from Educator Solutions HR Services where required.

1.6 If a Head Teacher has a grievance against a governor, they should raise the matter with the Chair of Governors. If the grievance includes the Chair of Governors, the Head Teacher should refer it to the Clerk to the Governors. The clerk should seek guidance from Educator Solutions HR Services on a mechanism for informal resolution, which may involve facilitation by a Local Authority Officer.

1.7 If it is not possible to resolve the grievance through these initial discussions, it may be appropriate for the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors to nominate someone to mediate with the aim of achieving a solution and conciliation. If mediation is to be used, it should take place before the formal procedure commences.

2. USING MEDIATION TO RESOLVE A GRIEVANCE

2.1 An independent third party or mediator can sometimes help resolve grievance issues. 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. The mediator is not there to judge, to say one person is right and the other wrong, or to tell those involved in the mediation what they should do. The mediator is in charge of the process of seeking to resolve the problem but not the outcome.

2.2 A mediator does not have to be someone specially trained for the task, but they should have the necessary skills to facilitate a discussion between two people who may have different views about a situation. Mediators may be employees from within the school, Educator Solutions HR Services or they may be from an external mediation provider, in which case, there may be a cost.

2.3 There are no hard-and-fast rules for when mediation is appropriate but it can be used:

For conflict involving colleagues of a similar job or grade, or between a line manager and their employees

At any stage in the conflict as long as any ongoing formal procedures are put in abeyance, or where mediation is included as a stage in the procedures themselves

To rebuild relationships after a formal dispute has been resolved

To address a range of issues, including relationship breakdown, personality clashes, communication problems, bullying and harassment.

2.4 Grievances most obviously lend themselves to the possibility of mediation.

3. CASES UNSUITABLE FOR MEDIATION

Mediation may not be suitable if:

- Used as a first resort – because people should be encouraged to speak to each other and talk to their manager before they seek a solution via mediation
- It is used by a manager to avoid their managerial responsibilities
- A decision about right or wrong is needed, for example where there is possible criminal activity
- The individual bringing a discrimination or harassment case wants it investigated
- The parties do not have the power to settle the issue
- One side is completely intransigent and using mediation will only raise unrealistic expectations of a positive outcome

4. THE FORMAL PROCEDURE

4.1 If an employee has not been able to resolve the grievance by talking informally with the manager or Head Teacher, Chair of Governors, or through mediation, then they should, without unreasonable delay, prepare a written statement of the grievance and submit this in line with the following:

- If the grievance is against a colleague other than the Head Teacher, the statement of grievance should be submitted to the Head Teacher
- If the grievance is against the Head Teacher, the statement of grievance should be submitted to the Chair of Governors

- If the grievance is against an individual Governor, the statement of grievance should be submitted to the Chair of Governors

- If the grievance is against the Chair of Governors, a Governors' Committee or the whole Governing Board, the statement of grievance should be submitted to the Clerk to the Governors who will take advice from Educator Solutions HR Services.

The statement should explain the nature of the grievance, including details of what the employee has done to try and resolve the matter informally, and what the employee considers to be a satisfactory outcome to the matter.

It is essential that there is a clear statement about the grievance, in order that it can be properly examined. See Grievance statement – formal procedure F307.

4.2 As appropriate, the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors or Clerk to Governors will identify a panel of Governors (Grievance Committee) to hear the grievance and work with the parties to achieve a resolution. The Grievance Committee would normally consist of three Governors although in some circumstances, where agreed between the parties, a panel of two Governors may be permitted. If insufficient Governors exist, or if there are too few governors who have not already been involved in the matter, Educator Solutions Governance Support may be able to identify experienced governors from other schools who can help with the process.

4.3 Step 1 – Statement of grievance and response

4.3.1 Once a statement of grievance has been received by the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors or Clerk to Governors, as appropriate (see above), that person will then share the statement of grievance with the person against whom the grievance is lodged.

The individual against whom the grievance is lodged then prepares a statement of response to the grievance. An appropriate timescale should be set for this stage of the process to ensure there is no unreasonable delay. However, the complexity of the situation will determine what is reasonable. If the matter has been considered at the informal stage of the procedure, a note of the steps taken to try to resolve the matter informally will also be required.

4.3.2 If further information is needed in order to respond to the grievance, the meeting outlined below may be postponed while a full investigation is carried out. If such an investigation is considered necessary, both parties will be kept informed.

4.4 Step 2 – Meeting

4.4.1 The Clerk to the Governing Board will liaise with Educator Solutions HR Services to make the necessary arrangements and invite the individual with a grievance to a meeting as soon as possible. The meeting would ideally take place within ten days of receipt of the statement of response, but this will depend on the availability of governors, the companion (if the individual chooses to be accompanied) and others who need to be in attendance. The employee will receive a copy of the statement of response and any other relevant documents to be considered at the meeting at least five days in advance of the meeting. The Grievance Committee will be issued with a copy of the statement of grievance, the statement in response, and any other supporting documentation provided by either party.

4.4.2 At the meeting, the employee has the chance to explain the grievance and their suggestions for resolving it. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a companion (i.e. a trade union representative or work colleague) at this meeting.

4.4.3 The Grievance Committee will be advised by a senior member of Educator Solutions HR Services and the Head Teacher may be accompanied and advised by an HR Consultant.

4.4.4 At the start of the meeting the Committee will consider whether it is more appropriate to meet with the employee separately from the other party, or may seek agreement from both parties for a joint meeting.

The agenda for a joint meeting will be as follows below. The term "Head Teacher" has been used below, but is of course replaceable with any other person against whom the grievance is lodged.

The Chair of the Committee will arrange introductions and set out how the meeting will be conducted. The Chair will outline the Committee's understanding of the grievance, as notified in the statement of grievance.

The employee will be asked to present the case and to answer questions from governors, the Head Teacher and their advisers.

The employee can call upon named witnesses to provide information and answer questions if appropriate

The Head Teacher will present their case and answer questions

The Head Teacher can call upon named witnesses to provide information and answer questions if appropriate

The employee makes a closing statement, followed by the closing statement of the Head Teacher

The Committee will then adjourn the meeting while they consider the information provided and how the grievance might be resolved. If practicable, the Committee will invite both parties back to the meeting on the same day to sum up the main points, and to outline what action, if any, they feel is necessary and try to achieve an agreed resolution.

4.5 Step 3 – Confirmation of outcome

4.5.1 The Chair of the panel will write to the employee within five working days of the meeting, with the decision of the panel and the reasons behind the decision. If the grievance is not upheld, there is a right of appeal against that decision.

4.6 Step 4 – Appeal

4.6.1 If the employee is not accepting of the Committee's decision, they have the right of appeal to another panel of governors. The members of the Appeal Committee will not have had any involvement in the first decision. Where an employee wishes to lodge an appeal against the decision of the Grievance Committee, they should, within ten working days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome, write to the Clerk to Governors setting out the grounds for appeal and enclosing any documents to be taken into account. Grievance statement - appeal against decision of Grievance Committee F307a can be used to do this. The employee and the Head Teacher will then be invited to another meeting which will normally take place within fifteen working days of receipt of appeal. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a companion to the appeal meeting.

4.6.2 The format for the meeting will follow that outlined in paragraph 4.4.4 above.

4.6.3 The Appeal Committee will consider the outcome from the first Grievance Committee hearing. They will listen to the grounds for appeal and consider any further statements provided by the Head Teacher or others involved.

4.6.4 The decision of the Appeal Committee is final and the Chair of the Appeal Committee will write to the employee within five working days to confirm this and to share the outcome of the meeting. The Appeal Committee will give the reasons behind the decision made.

5. RECORD KEEPING

5.1 The grievance and related papers will be stored on the file of the employee who raised the grievance. If the grievance is against another named individual and is upheld, it may be appropriate for a disciplinary investigation to be undertaken and/or a professional guidance letter issued, in which case relevant papers may also be placed on that individual's personal file.

Data protection
The school processes personal data collected during informal complaints and the formal grievance procedure in accordance with its data protection policy. In particular, data collected as part of informal complaints and the grievance procedure is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of responding to the complaints or conducting the grievance procedure. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the school's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure.

Associated documents
Grievance model policy P307
Grievance model procedure P307a
Grievance statement – formal procedure F307
Grievance statement – appeal against decision of Grievance Committee F307a