Grove Learning Trust

Grievance Policy

Date Ratified

Dec 25

Version

V1

Vision

Together, we will create remarkable schools in which all children can thrive.

As one organisation, Grove Learning Trust, with schools that are unique and united, shares aspiration for our children, which is underpinned by a strong commitment to our values.

Trust >> Connect >> Collaborate

Our policies underpin our vision and set out clearly our expectations of each other.

Principles

1. This is the grievance policy of Grove Learning Trust (the Trust).

2. When making decisions under this policy senior leaders must always act in a way that treats an employee (or anyone else involved in the process) fairly. This means giving them adequate information to be able to be able to express a view and properly considering that view.

3. This policy does not form part of any terms and conditions and may be amended by the Trust.

4. While this policy should be followed, it may be varied to meet the needs of the particular situation. For example, while timescales should be followed, if they cannot be met then reasons will be given why. If any other variation of the policy is necessary, then reasons will be given for any change, but senior leaders must take appropriate advice first.

5. When this policy is being followed detailed notes should be kept of meetings and communications with any relevant person.

6. The Trust values and welcomes the role of the Trade Unions when following this policy and staff are encouraged to seek appropriate advice.

7. The Trust recognises that a grievance process is a difficult experience for staff and will seek to support staff throughout the process. Further, staff are encouraged to seek additional support as required.

8. This policy takes into account the ACAS Code of Conduct.

9. This policy does not form part of any contract of employment, and it may be amended.

10. This policy applies to employees. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns. Non-employees should still raise concerns through the appropriate process such as the Trust Complaints procedure.

Purpose

11. The purpose of this policy is to support the Trust in its policy objectives. These include that the Trust:
    - Shall be an inclusive employer and fully comply with the spirit and law contained in the Equality Act 2010
    - Is committed to the application of an employment culture in which people can feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity, and tolerance, irrespective of their individual differences or circumstances;
    - Will not tolerate harassment or bullying within any of its workplaces;
    - Expects the workplace to be an open environment and one in which everyone is treated reasonably and without fear of bullying, harassment or victimisation;
    - Expects grievances to be dealt with sensitively, professionally, speedily, and fairly.

12. The purpose of the policy is to enable employees to raise issues experienced at work. These could be issues such as: health and safety; work relationships; bullying or harassment; working practices; the working environment or

discrimination issues. Where an employee considers that there are breaches of legislation or other legal requirements then they should also consider the whistleblowing policy.

13. The grievance process does not apply to disciplinary, capability or other policy matters which have their own separate right of appeal. However, if an employee considers that there is something inappropriate about the application of other policies and the point does not fall within the appeal then a grievance may be raised.

14. When responding to a grievance the Trust will keep matters confidential. Written grievances will be placed on a personnel file along with a record of any decisions taken and any notes or other documents compiled during the grievance process.

15. If an employee has any concerns about participating in the process (for example due to a medical condition or disability) then this should be raised at an early stage to allow specific adjustments to be made. Employees can also seek support at any stage.

Process

16. The grievance process has three distinct stages. Grievances can be raised informally, formally and there is a right of appeal against any decision made in response to a formal grievance.

Informal Stage

17. If possible, grievances are best resolved informally. An employee who is unhappy about the treatment they have received, or any aspect of their work, should discuss their grievance with their line manager in the first instance. This enables the line manager an opportunity to resolve the grievance without it

progressing to the formal stage. Should the grievance be regarding a line manager, please discuss this with the next most senior person.

18. Employees should raise their grievances in a timely manner and co-operate with the Trust so that the grievance may be resolved. Equally, line managers should respond promptly and sensitively to any grievances raised and ensure that the policy is applied fairly and consistently. The employee raising the grievance may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at meetings held at any stage of the process.

19. It is advisable for an employee to keep details of all incidents and issues, including any informal discussions. A record of this nature is beneficial when identifying and resolving issues because it may be the cumulative effect of another's conduct or behaviour which constitutes a grievance rather than a single incident.

20. All issues of bullying and harassment, whoever the perpetrator, must be reported. This does not prevent the matter being dealt with informally but does enable the employer to fulfil its responsibility to eliminate inappropriate conduct.

21. Where in the manager's view the action/conduct complained of is sufficiently serious as to potentially constitute misconduct, the manager should implement the Trust's disciplinary procedure to address the conduct.

22. Where attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work, or are not accepted by the complainant, it may be appropriate for a formal grievance to be raised.

Formal Stage

23. If in the employee's view the conduct or action which gave rise to the grievance could not be resolved through informal action, they should raise the matter formally under the grievance procedure.

24. At this stage the employee must put their grievance in writing and submit their grievance to an appropriate manager. Should the grievance be concerning a member of the executive team, this should be shared with the CEO. Where the grievance is regarding the CEO, this must be shared exclusively with the head of the board of trustees. It is acceptable to submit a grievance via email. The employee should:
    - Be clear that they are raising a grievance;
    - Provide concise and factual information about the nature of their grievance;
    - Use professional language;
    - State what outcome they would like to resolve the grievance.

25. If an employee needs help writing their grievance, they should seek assistance from a work colleague or trade union representative. A copy of the formal grievance documentation will be given to all relevant parties.

26. On receiving a written grievance, the following process will take place:
(A)A meeting will be scheduled to discuss the grievance in more detail with the person who submitted the grievance, a member of the HR team and the most appropriate senior member of staff to the employee (not involved in the process). This meeting will be held within 5 working days of the grievance being submitted. The employee is welcome to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. This meeting will be minuted, and a copy of these minutes will be shared with the employee within 24 hours to confirm accuracy.

27. If the grievance is regarding another employee and needs investigating, the employee will be made aware of a grievance being submitted, provided with detail of the allegation and a meeting will be requested with them to allow

their response. They will be given 5 working days' notice of this meeting and are welcome to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. This meeting will be minuted and a copy of these minutes will be shared with the employee within 24 hours to confirm accuracy.

28. If witnesses are detailed during these investigations, further meetings will be requested to obtain and gather evidence. This meeting will be minuted and a copy of these minutes will be shared with the employee within 24 hours to confirm accuracy. Although it is not a right for witnesses to be accompanied during these witness discussions, any request for them to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative should be agreed, provided that it does not delay the process.

29. Once all relevant meetings have been held, evidence will be considered, and employees will be informed in writing of the decision and the reason/s for it within 5 working days. The confirmation letter will advise the employee of their right of appeal. Where appropriate, the outcome letter will advise of any actions that are proposed to resolve the grievance. Any person named within the grievance will be informed of the decision at the same time.

30. There may be a range of possible remedies where a complaint is upheld, including:
    - Formal apology;
    - Training;
    - Mediation;
    - Counselling;
    - Changes to work methods/styles;
    - Redeployment may be considered , but only with the agreement of the employee;
    - Formal disciplinary action against the perpetrator.

31. In exceptional circumstances, the evidence given by individuals may have to remain confidential. Where confidentiality is necessary, the reason/s will be explained and an appropriate summary of the evidence gathered will be given to the employee.

32. If the lead of the meeting concludes, based on the evidence they have collected, that the grievance is vexatious and/or malicious this could result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee who raised the grievance.

Appeals

33. If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome of the grievance hearing they may appeal. Any appeal should be made in writing to the person named in the outcome letter. The appeal should be made within five working days of receipt of the written outcome. The appeal letter should clearly state the grounds of the appeal. This should state the reason why the outcome was wrong or any action taken was inappropriate and the resolution they are seeking.

34. An appeal meeting will be arranged as soon as is reasonably practicable with an appeals panel. This panel will consist of 1 member more senior than the representative from the HR team and another member of the senior leadership team within the trust not previously involved in the process.

35. The employee will be given at least seven working days' written notice of the appeal hearing. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative and it is their responsibility to arrange their attendance.

36. The chair of the original grievance hearing will provide the appeal panel with the minutes of the original meeting together with any relevant papers/information gathered in support of their decision.

37. The person/s identified in the grievance may be asked to attend, together with appropriate representation. Witnesses may also be asked to attend.

38. The appeal hearing will consider the grounds that have been put forward and assess whether the decision reached in the grievance hearing was appropriate. The appeal is not a rehearing of the original grievance hearing and will only consider any areas with which the employee was dissatisfied as identified in the appeal letter. The chair of the meeting may confine discussions to those areas specifically raised in the appeal letter rather than allowing a repeat discussion of any area raised in the original grievance. The employee will be given the opportunity to further explain why they are still feeling aggrieved and the resolution they would like.

39. The chair of the appeals panel will advise the employee in writing of the outcome of the appeal as soon as possible and in any event within five working days of the hearing.

40. There is no further appeal after the appeal panel has reached and notified a decision.

Grievances from ex-employees

41. There is no legal requirement to deal with ex-employees, however, the Trust may consider dealing with such grievances to identify potential tribunal complaints and working to resolve matters and where appropriate prevent them from becoming tribunal complaints. These will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and HR can offer advice and support with this.

Where to raise your grievance

42.

Complaint about	Address your complaint to	Contact Information
Member of staff (school based – not head)	Head	Contact the Head via their school email address.
Head	Executive Team	Contact the executive team via the admin@grovelearningtrust.co.uk email address.
Governor, clerk to governors or chair of governors	Governance and Compliance Lead	Contact the Governance and Compliance Lead (Sarah Rutherford) using sarah.rutherford@grovelearnningtrust.co.uk.
Member of central team staff	CEO	Contact the CEO (interim CEO Andrew Wilson) using Andrew.wilson@grovelearningtrust.co.uk.
CEO	Chair of Trust Board	Contact the Chair of the board of Trustee's Anne-Marie using Annie.howroyd@grovelearningtrust.co.uk.
Trustee (Not chair)	Chair of Trust Board	Contact the Chair of the board of Trustee's Anne-Marie using Annie.howroyd@grovelearningtrust.co.uk.
Chair of Trust Board	Governance and Compliance Lead	Contact the Governance and Compliance Lead (Sarah Rutherford) using sarah.rutherford@grovelearnningtrust.

Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Author (AU) / Approver (AP)
Draft 01	Sept 23	Completion of first draft	PHP (AU)
Final – A	Autumn 23	To be ratified by the Board of Directors	BOD(AP)
	Summer 24	Ratified by S&P	S&P (AP)
	Summer 25	Reviewed	CS (AU)
	Autumn 25	Reviewed	CS (AU) AW (AP)