Resolving Workplace Issues Policy

Date Approved	Committee responsible for review of policy	Next Review Date	Policy on Website	Statutory Policy
February 2026	HR	February 2027	N	Y

Headteacher: Mrs Emma Humphrey

This policy is taken from the Hampshire Manual of Personal Practice.

1. Policy statement

1.1 The School is committed to providing a workplace where employees feel valued and fairly treated.

1.2 This policy defines the school's approach to the management of concerns from employees about their employment and the process to resolve concerns.

1.3 The School is committed to providing a workplace where all employees are treated with dignity. Discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation is not acceptable, will not be tolerated, and action will be taken. Appropriate management action may include formal action under the Disciplinary policy.

2. Scope

2.1 The Resolving Workplace Issues Policy is for all employees, including temporary and fixed-term staff, working within a school/school managed provision/establishment or Education Centre (which for ease of reference are referred to throughout this document as 'schools').

3. Policy outcomes

3.1 The aims of this policy are to:

- find appropriate solutions to issues or concerns
- resolve issues fairly and within a reasonable timeframe
- resolve the majority of issues at the informal stage
- maintain or restore harmonious working relationships
- to support day to day communication and discussion between employees and their managers

4. Check which policy to use

4.1 This policy may be used by any employee that wishes to raise a workplace issue.

4.2 Concerns about a workplace practice or the services provided by the School, such as alleged dishonest or illegal activities, should be addressed using the Whistleblowing Policy.

4.3 Issues not recognised or considered under the Resolving Workplace Issues Policy:

- an issue outside the responsibility or control of the school
- an issue not relevant to employment

- a concern, problem, incident or event that has previously been formally raised by the same employee under the Resolving Workplace Issues Policy.

4.4 The Resolving Workplace Issues Policy cannot be used to circumvent the consideration of legitimate management action on matters of indiscipline, attendance, capability or pay. The employee will not normally be allowed to raise a separate formal workplace issue related to any action taken or contemplated under another policy. Such concerns will usually be managed within the meetings, hearings or appeal process taking place within these policies. Where an employee does raise a workplace issue in this circumstance, the Responsible Person will review the nature of the concerns being raised. The responsible person will decide the most appropriate policy to consider the concerns under; this will either be the HR policy which gave rise to the concerns, or this Resolving Workplace Issues policy.

4.5 Where the concerns are not related to the other formal policy, that policy may, in exceptional circumstances, be temporarily suspended to deal with the workplace issue.

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5. Key definitions

5.1 The School's definition of a **workplace issue** is a concern, problem, incident or event that an employee raises with their employer regarding an aspect of their employment.

5.2 **Responsible person -** for the purposes of this policy the responsible person is normally the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors in the case of an employee's workplace issues about a governor) unless they identify another nominated person. In all cases the Responsible Person is the person who is responsible for one or all of the following: receiving the workplace issue (both informal or formal), managing the issue with the employee, undertaking further enquiries as necessary (or commissioning an Investigating Officer to do so) and bringing parties together to discuss recommendations with the aim of finding appropriate workplace solutions. In the case of workplace issues concerning the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will perform this role or identify a nominated governor and in the event of an employee having a workplace issue about the Chair of Governors, the issue should be directed to the Clerk to Governors to liaise with the Vice Chair of Governors to act as the Responsible Person or identify a nominated governor.

5.3 **Investigating officer –** is the person who is responsible for undertaking further enquiries as necessary and producing an investigation report. The responsible person may also be the investigating officer.

5.4 **Chair of the appeal meeting** – for the purposes of this policy the 'chair of the appeal meeting' applies at the appeal stage where an independent person or panel hears the issue in the presence of the responsible person, the employee and other relevant parties and determines the outcome of the appeal.

5.5 **Conciliation** – is an informal, open process involving an internal, impartial individual, where this can be accommodated, to bring parties together to help them to reach a suitable resolution. This process is more suited to practical solutions to workplace issues.

5.6 **Mediation** – schools may wish to consider a process involving a trained mediator to support parties to resolve a conflict and to reach a compromise. This process is more suited to the breakdown of a relationship with a colleague or manager and should be considered at all stages of the policy. Where schools wish to use external mediation there will likely be a cost for this. It is a matter for the school to determine if they wish to pay for external mediation.

5.7 **Working days** - where reference is made to working days, these are defined as the 195 days in which the school is in session, unless the individual is either a 52-week support staff worker (and not on annual leave) or a member of the leadership pay range and not subject to the 195 days, the investigation could continue during the school closure period subject to relevant parties being available. For teachers subject to 195 days and support staff who work less than 52 weeks, processes can only continue in their non-working time where staff involved are in agreement.

6. Principles

6.1 Resolving a workplace issue is based on the following principles:

- the process can only be fully effective if those involved demonstrate their commitment to working together to resolve their differences
- following the policy alone is not enough, it is the actions and flexibilities of those involved that reach resolution

6.2 It is beneficial for workplace issues to be raised promptly to enable effective resolution. Therefore issues should be raised **within 3 months** of the event(s) or incident(s) that have led to the workplace issue.

Resolving workplace issues informally

7. Timescales

7.1 Issues must be raised and addressed without undue delay to support the effective resolution at the informal stage.

8. Raising a workplace issue informally

8.1 All issues must first be raised informally as soon as possible. The employee must raise their issue with their line manager or Headteacher if the issue relates to the employee's line manager. If the issue relates to the Headteacher it should be raised with the Chair of Governors. If this issue relates to the Chair of Governors, the issue should be directed to the Clerk to Governors to liaise with the Vice Chair. The employee must be signposted to the Resolving Workplace Issues employee how to guide.

8.2 If the issue has been raised to their line manager, then the line manager will raise it with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. The headteacher / Chair of Governors will then determine who is the responsible person.

9. Resolving a workplace issue informally

9.1 The responsible person must have an initial discussion with the employee to explore their issue(s). If it is possible to resolve the issue at this meeting the responsible person and employee will do so.

9.2 In some cases it may be necessary for the responsible person to make further enquiries or establish facts before a resolution can be reached.

9.3 Where further enquiries are carried out, the responsible person must meet with the employee again to confirm the outcome of the enquiries and what resolutions have been identified.

9.4 The employee is not usually represented/ accompanied at any discussions within the informal stage of the policy. There may be circumstances when the employee asks to be represented. This can be by a professional association/ trade union representative or a work colleague. Consideration should be given to any requests. This should be accommodated where it does not cause a delay to the process.

10. Outcome of raising a workplace issue informally

10.1 The responsible person will ensure there is a written record provided of the outcome, any enquiries and what resolutions have been identified at the meeting. The written record will be shared with the employee, the line manager and the Headteacher.

11. Follow up on informal outcomes

11.1 The employee and line manager/headteacher must take joint responsibility for putting agreed resolutions into practice. For example, attending mediation sessions where this was part of the agreed resolutions

11.2 It is the line manager/ Headteacher's responsibility to follow up on informal outcomes to ensure the resolutions are implemented and are working in practice.

11.3 The employee has the right to submit a formal workplace issue if they do not feel that the proposed resolutions have been effective.

Resolving workplace issues formally

12. Policy stages

12.1 There are two possible stages:

- Stage 1 - workplace issue formal investigation
- Stage 2 - workplace issue appeal

12.2 Conciliation or mediation can be considered at any stage of this policy. They cannot be imposed as a course of action but can be recommended as a suitable means of resolution.

13. Stage 1 – Workplace issue formal investigation

14. Lodging a formal workplace issue

14.1 Where informal processes do not resolve the issue and/or where the informal step within this policy has been exhausted a formal workplace issue should be submitted in writing, normally within 7 working days of the relevant event or outcome of the informal stage.

14.2 Employees are expected to register their formal workplace issue by completing the workplace issue resolution form (Appendix 1).

14.3 The formal workplace issue resolution form must be submitted to their line manager or Headteacher if the issue relates to the employee's line manager. If the issue relates to the Headteacher it should be raised with the Chair of Governors. If this issue relates to the Chair of Governors, the issue should be directed to the Clerk to Governors to liaise with the Vice Chair.

14.4 If the issue has been raised to their line manager, then the line manager will raise it with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. The headteacher / Chair of Governors will identify a responsible person to manage the formal process.

14.5 The responsible person will need to determine whether they are undertaking the investigation themselves or appointing a separate investigating officer.

15. Timescales

15.1 An initial meeting must be arranged with the employee to identify and determine the workplace issues as soon as is reasonably possible.

15.2 The investigation and proposed solution(s) to the formal workplace issues should be identified without unreasonable delay and normally within **35 working days** of the initial meeting unless there are exceptional circumstances in which case a reasonable timescale may be agreed between the responsible person and the employee. Consideration should be given to school closure periods that could affect the timescales.

16. Resolving a formal workplace issue

16.1 This has 3 stages:

1. Initial Meeting
2. Investigation Meeting (this could be incorporated into the Initial Meeting)
3. Outcome Meeting

16.2 The Investigating Officer should:

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

17. Initial meeting

17.1 The Investigating Officer must write to the employee to invite them to an initial meeting providing at least 7 working days' notice. The Investigating Officer must meet with the employee to discuss the nature of their workplace issue. If it is possible to resolve the issue, or part of the issue, at this stage the Investigating Officer and employee will do so.

18. Investigation meeting

18.1 In some cases, it may be necessary for the Investigating Officer to make further enquiries or establish facts before a resolution can be reached. Dependent on the nature and complexity of the workplace issue it may be necessary to hold investigation meetings with the employee and/or relevant parties.

18.2 The employee, or their companion, must submit any relevant information to arrive at least **3 working days** before the meeting.

19. Outcome meeting

19.1 Following completion of the Investigation Report, the Investigating Officer will share the report with the responsible person. The Responsible Person must write to the employee to invite them to a stage 1 outcome meeting providing at least 7 working days' notice. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the outcome of the Investigation Report and the solutions.

19.2 The employee has the right to be accompanied at a formal meeting by a professional association/trade union representative or work colleague.

20. Outcome of a formal investigation

20.1 At the meeting, the Responsible Person must advise the employee of:

- the outcome
- their right of appeal

20.2 The Responsible Person must confirm in writing the outcome of the stage 1 formal investigation and what solutions have been identified at the meeting enclosing a copy of the Investigation Report within 5 working days.

21. Follow up on outcomes

21.1 It is the responsibility of the line manager/ Headteacher or responsible person to follow up on outcomes to ensure the resolutions are implemented and are in practice.

22. Stage 2 - Workplace issue appeal

23. Right of appeal

23.1 An employee must ensure their written appeal is received by the Clerk to Governors within **10 working days** of the date of the stage 1 formal meeting outcome letter.

24. Lodging a workplace issue appeal

24.1 The appeal must be made in writing. The employee must clearly state the grounds for their appeal, for example, faults in the procedure followed, new evidence not originally available, a decision they believe is unfair. The employee must not raise any new issues as part of their appeal.

24.2 Employees are expected to complete Part B of the Workplace Issue Resolution Form. Any additional documentation to be reviewed must be attached.

25. Timescales

25.1 All workplace issue appeals must be addressed within **21 working days** of receipt of Part B of the Workplace Issue Resolution Form.

26. Workplace issue appeal hearing

26.1 On behalf of the chair of the appeal hearing, the clerk to governors will write to the employee to invite them to a stage 2 workplace issue appeal hearing, enclosing any management documents.

26.2 The chair of the appeal hearing must hold a workplace issue appeal hearing to discuss the employee's appeal.

26.3 The employee has the right to be accompanied at a formal hearing by a professional association/trade union representative or a work colleague.

26.4 The employee, or their companion, must submit any relevant information to arrive at least **3 working days** before a meeting.

27. Outcome of a workplace issue appeal hearing

27.1 The chair of the appeal hearing must confirm the outcome of the meeting and what resolutions have been identified in writing **within 5 working days**. This decision is final as there is no further right of appeal.

28. Follow up on outcomes

28.1 The employee and line manager/headteacher must take joint responsibility for putting agreed resolutions into practice. For example, attending mediation sessions where this was part of the agreed resolutions.

28.2 It is the responsibility of the line manager / Headteacher or responsible person to follow up on outcomes to ensure the resolutions are implemented and are in practice.

29. Harassment and/or Bullying

29.1 The resolving workplace issues policy will apply to investigating issues of harassment and/or bullying. The Responsible Person/Investigating Officer is required to reach resolutions in relation to the workplace issues themselves in addition to determining whether harassment and/or bullying has occurred.

29.2 If at any stage of this process the Responsible Person/Investigating Officer deems there has been a potential breach of school policies and procedures, appropriate action may be taken under alternate policies.

30. Collective workplace issues

30.1 Collective workplace issues arise when a number of employees raise a related workplace issue. In such cases, an employee will be identified from the group to act as a spokesperson at any formal hearings.

30.2 A representative of a recognised professional association/ trade union may raise a workplace issue on behalf of two or more members.

30.3 The outcomes of a collective workplace issue will apply to all employees who raised the issue(s).

30.4 The same formal process for resolving workplace issues will be followed.

31. Related documents

31.1 To help apply this policy you may find it useful to read the following:

- Managers' How To Guide Resolving Workplace Issues
- Employees' How To Guide Resolving Workplace Issues
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Model Code of Conduct
- Guidelines for dealing with allegations of Harassment and Bullying
- Equality and Diversity

32. Support

32.1 Some key support services include:

Education Personnel Services for all initial queries, please contact the EPS Helpdesk through the Manual of Personnel Practice at https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/education-personnel-services/manual/contact-us
Sign into your Services Portal account

Occupational Health & Wellbeing (for schools which subscribe to HCC's Occupational Health Service) for resources and general information on how to support your health and wellbeing go to https://www.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-services/occupational-health/schools

For further advice and support relating to **specific health issues arising from the emotional or physical impact of an incident**, you can contact the Occupational Health team on phoning 02380 626600 or emailing them at occupational.health@hants.gov.uk

Employee Support – if your school has purchased the service, you may have access to free, confidential and impartial Employee Support at https://www.hants.gov.uk/hampshire-services/occupational-health/schools/employee-support

Trade Unions/Professional Associations - Members of a trade union/professional association can contact their trade union/professional association via their website to find out about the support available and discuss specific issues.

School Staff Wellbeing and Resilience Webpages – website with tools and resources to support staff in schools at https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools-resilience

33. Policy governance

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34. Appendix 1 – Workplace issue resolution form

The formal workplace issue resolution form must be submitted to the line manager. If the workplace issue relates to the line manager, the form must be submitted to the Headteacher or nominated person.

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Name of Line Manager: _____

School: _____

Mobile Number: _____

Work Number: _____

Home Number: _____

Work e-mail address: _____

Home e-mail address: _____

Preferred method of contact: _____

Working days: _____

Name of Professional Association/

Trade Union representative (if applicable): _____

Would you like the Trade Union representative to be copied into all correspondence? Yes/No

Please Select the reason for your workplace issue (choose the option which best relates to your case)

relations with colleagues or management
bullying and harassment
discrimination
changes to working practices
working environment
terms and conditions
health and safety
organisational change

Please continue on next page

Part A – Stage 1 Formal

Please detail what resolution(s) have been put in place at the raising workplace issues informally stage

Outcome of raising issues stage and suggested resolutions

Please state why you feel the resolution(s) at the raising workplace issues informally stage have not worked or not been implemented.

Please state how you feel your workplace issue could be effectively resolved.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

For completion by the responsible person after the workplace issue meeting	
Name of formal workplace issue responsible person	
Job title	

Contact details	**Telephone:** **Email:**
Date formal meeting completed	
Outcome	Meeting completed (attach a copy of the outcome letter)

Part B – Stage 2 - Formal appeal
Please submit with Part A as previously completed

Please ensure you use the outcome of formal stage one letter to complete your workplace issue appeal. It is important at this stage to consider how your workplace issue may be effectively resolved taking into account all resolutions that have been put in place at previous stages.
Your appeal must be made in writing, and you must make clear the grounds for your appeal, for example, faults in the procedure followed, new evidence not originally available, a decision you believe is unfair. No new issues can be raised at the appeal.

Please detail what resolution(s) were put in place at the formal workplace issues meeting Outcome of formal workplace issue meeting and suggested resolutions
Please provide a <u>concise summary</u> of your appeal against the outcome of the formal workplace issue meeting and which recommendations you are disagreeing with (there will be an opportunity to provide further detail at your meeting). Reason for appeal and remaining issue(s)

Please state why you disagree with the recommendations

Please state how you feel your workplace issue could be effectively resolved

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Please submit to the Clerk to Governors within **10 working days** of the date of the Stage 1 formal meeting outcome letter.

For completion by the chair of the meeting after the appeal meeting	
Name of manager of workplace issue appeal meeting	
Job title	
Contact details	**Telephone:** **Email:**
Date appeal meeting completed	
Outcome	**Appeal completed (attach a copy of the outcome letter)**