



Thameside Primary School: Grievance Policy

Approved by Governors: September 2026

Review date: September 2027



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Additional Guidance

- Guidance for employees on what to include in a grievance letter
- School Bullying and Harassment Policy

(The additional guidance is not part of the policy but is available to assist those involved in the policy. It can be found in school or from HR)

Policy reviewed by:	Sophie Greenaway
Key Changes:	• Simplified and clarified mediation arrangements. Clarified grievance and appeal submission procedures. • Updated timescales to allow for a fair and reasonable process. • Clarified potential grievance outcomes and next steps. • Improved consistency between the main policy, employee guidance and FAQs. • Removed duplicated wording and updated language throughout the policy.



1. Objectives and scope

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, in line with the school's Equality Policy and statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments will be made as appropriate, particularly where an employee has a disability or protected characteristic.

- 1.1. The School is committed to providing a working environment where everyone is treated with fairness, consistency, dignity and respect. This policy provides a framework for assisting employees and managers in seeking to resolve disputes and/or differences arising from employment within the School. These matters will be resolved fairly and without undue delay, either informally or formally. No employee will suffer detriment, victimisation, or discrimination for raising a grievance in good faith. Any such retaliation may itself be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- 1.2. Grievances may be concerned with a wide range of issues, including but not limited to the allocation of work, working environment or conditions, the opportunities that have been given for career development or the way in which an employee has been managed.
- 1.3. Line managers must respond to issues raised in a timely way. In most cases grievances can be resolved informally by the manager and individual concerned.
- 1.4. The School encourages all the parties to a grievance to look proactively for a positive resolution.
- 1.5. This policy has been agreed with the Joint Trade Unions as the most effective means of resolving a grievance or collective dispute.
- 1.6. If two or more employees have identical grievances and wish them to be addressed in the same grievance process, they can raise a collective grievance. Collective grievances will be dealt with under this policy, with reference to the provisions in section 5 below.
- 1.7. The formal policy is for use in situations where it is not possible to resolve issues informally or through the use of mediation. The School expects all such cases to be dealt with fairly, consistently and without undue delay.
- 1.8. This policy applies to all employees of the School, including those on permanent, temporary or part-time contracts, job sharers, and employees on non-standard terms of employment.
- 1.9. The School may choose to investigate concerns raised by former employees on a case by case basis.
- 1.10. Issues that are the subject of collective negotiation or consultation with the recognised trade unions will not be considered under the Grievance Policy, unless it relates to a failure to engage in collective negotiation or consultation.

2. Relationship to other School policies



- 2.1 This policy is intended to provide a fair process for employees to raise concerns relating to their employment. It will not normally be used to challenge decisions where another school policy, procedure or appeal process provides a specific mechanism for addressing the concern.

Examples of matters that would ordinarily be dealt with under alternative policies or procedures include, but are not limited to:

- Job evaluation appeals
- Recruitment and selection decisions
- Outcomes arising from the Disciplinary Procedure
- Outcomes arising from the Sickness Absence Management Procedure
- Outcomes arising from the Poor Performance (Capability) Procedure
- The application of pension scheme rules
- Matters relating to probation
- Organisational change processes, including restructures that may result in redundancy

This list is not exhaustive. Where a separate policy, procedure or appeal process applies, employees will normally be expected to use that process rather than the Grievance Procedure.

- 2.2 The School's Bullying and Harassment Policy provides for a complaint of bullying or harassment to be registered as a formal grievance under this policy. Allegations of bullying or harassment often need to be handled quite differently and further guidance is available within the Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- 2.3 The School has a Whistleblowing Policy for raising concerns about any alleged wrongdoing in the workplace such as fraud or corruption, unlawful acts or dangers to health and safety. Matters raised under the Whistleblowing Policy may more appropriately be dealt with as a grievance (and potentially vice versa). Whether allegations are more appropriately dealt with under the Whistleblowing or Grievance Policy is a management decision. The key point is that the concerns will be dealt with seriously and progressed.
- 2.4 A grievance raised by an employee in response to an investigation and/or management action into his or her apparent misconduct, underperformance or absence may be addressed in a number of ways, depending on the nature and timing of the grievance. This could include:
- Commissioning an independent investigation
 - Hearing both issues at the same time in a single hearing
 - Pausing formal management action while the grievance is considered.
- 2.5 Where a grievance relates to working conditions, the 'status quo' will be maintained until all formal stages of this policy have been exhausted. The status quo is defined as the working conditions prior to the raising of the grievance. Status quo will not apply where there would be a detrimental impact on service provision or where there are over-riding statutory obligations.
- 2.6 The School recognises that a grievance process can be stressful and upsetting for everyone involved. All employees are entitled to be treated respectfully. Both the employee raising the grievance and those facing the alleged grievance will be kept regularly updated on



progression. The investigating officer or HR adviser, where appropriate, will provide details of support services and trade union contacts available.

3. Informal resolution and mediation

- 3.1 All employees are encouraged to discuss their concerns at the earliest opportunity with their line manager or, where they are a member of a trade union, with their trade union representative.
- 3.2 The school encourages informal resolution of grievances wherever possible and appropriate. Informal resolution is often the quickest and least disruptive way to address concerns and can help restore working relationships without the need for a formal process. This may include, for example, a facilitated conversation, clarification of expectations, an agreed way forward, mediation (where suitable), or practical steps to resolve the issue. Informal resolution will not prevent an employee from raising a formal grievance where this is needed and may not be appropriate where the concerns are serious, involve allegations of misconduct (including bullying, harassment or discrimination), or where an informal approach has already been attempted without success.
- 3.3 Any informal outcome should be confirmed in writing where appropriate, so that expectations and next steps are clear to everyone.

3.4. Mediation

Mediation is one possible way of resolving workplace concerns and may be offered at any stage of this procedure, including as part of informal resolution, during a formal grievance process, or as an outcome following a formal process where relationships would benefit from rebuilding. Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process in which an accredited or suitably trained mediator supports two or more individuals to explore issues, improve understanding, and seek to reach an agreed way forward. Any agreement is made by the individuals involved; the mediator does not make findings, determine who is right or wrong, or impose outcomes. The mediator's role is to facilitate constructive dialogue and help the parties identify workable solutions.

3.5 Suitability and participation

Mediation will not be suitable in every situation and may not be appropriate where there are serious allegations, safeguarding concerns, significant power imbalances, or where either party does not feel able to participate. Participation is entirely voluntary. If any party declines mediation, or if mediation does not proceed or does not resolve the matter, this will not influence the consideration or outcome of the grievance, and the grievance process will continue without delay.

4. Formal action

- 4.1 The first stage of the formal procedure is for the employee to submit their grievance in writing to the appropriate manager. Normally, this will be the employee's line manager. Where the grievance concerns the employee's line manager, it should be submitted to the next appropriate senior manager or the Headteacher. Where the grievance concerns the Headteacher, it must be submitted to the Chair of Governors, who will seek appropriate HR advice. Receipt of the grievance will normally be acknowledged within five working days.



- 4.2 Normally, a formal grievance should be raised within three calendar months of the incident or issue giving rise to the complaint. Where the grievance relates to a series of events, the time period will normally run from the most recent incident.
An extension to this timescale may be agreed where it was not reasonably practicable for the employee to raise the grievance earlier or where there are other exceptional circumstances.
- 4.3 The written grievance will form the basis of the subsequent meeting and any investigations, so it is important that it sets out clearly the nature of the grievance and the outcome being sought. Grievance letters and supporting evidence may be submitted electronically. Relevant emails, screenshots, or digital records may be included as part of supporting evidence. If the grievance is unclear, it may be necessary to seek further clarification from the employee before any meeting takes place. Guidance for employees on what to include in a grievance letter is available in School or from HR. When an employee submits a grievance in writing, the following steps will normally be taken:
- Investigation commissioned where appropriate
 - Evidence gathered and relevant individuals interviewed
 - Grievance meeting held
 - Outcome decision reached and confirmed in writing
 - Appeal opportunity offered where relevant
- 4.4 Before proceeding to a grievance meeting, it may be necessary to carry out investigations of any allegations made, although the confidentiality of the grievance process will be respected, wherever possible. If any evidence is gathered in the course of these investigations, the employee will be given a copy at least three working days before the meeting so that he/she can consider their response. In exceptional circumstances, the evidence given by individuals may have to remain confidential. Where it is necessary to protect the confidentiality or welfare of another individual, the School may need to withhold or anonymise certain information. Where this happens, the employee will be told the reason for this and, wherever possible, provided with sufficient information to understand and respond to the substance of the evidence.
- 4.5 Normally a senior member of school staff will be designated to investigate the grievance and chair the grievance meeting. Exceptions to this will be considered on a case by case basis. The nature of the grievance will determine the most appropriate way to establish the facts and the manager may seek to appoint an investigating officer to undertake the investigation. Where the grievance concerns the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will normally chair the grievance meeting and seek appropriate HR advice. Where necessary, the Chair of Governors may appoint another governor or an appropriately independent external investigator to investigate the matter.

The right to be accompanied

- 4.6 Employees have a statutory right to be accompanied to a formal grievance meeting. The chosen companion may be a fellow worker, a trade union representative, or an official employed by a trade union. The employee should normally tell the manager chairing the meeting who they have chosen as their companion at least three working days before the



meeting, where possible. Reasonable adjustments will be made where needed if the employee has a disability. This could include, for example, the provision of a support worker or advocate with knowledge of the disability and its effect, in addition to the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union representative.

- 4.7 The meeting can be rearranged if the employee or their companion cannot attend the scheduled meeting for a reason not foreseeable at the time. The employee or their representative must propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original date of the meeting. The School is obliged to rearrange the meeting only once; however, if an alternative date is proposed by the employee, it will not be unreasonably refused.
- 4.8 The School considers it is good practice to allow the chosen companion to participate as fully as possible in the meeting, including putting questions to any witnesses who may be asked to attend if appropriate. However, the companion will not answer questions on the employee's behalf or address the meeting if the employee does not wish it.
- 4.9 If the employee is not accompanied, the manager will check the employee understands that they have the right to be. If they decline to be accompanied, a note will be made to that effect.

The grievance meeting

The School aims to deal with formal grievances without unreasonable delay. The School will normally seek to progress the grievance, including any necessary investigation, outcome and appeal, within a reasonable timeframe. Where this is not possible because of the complexity of the case, the availability of relevant individuals or other exceptional circumstances, the employee will be kept informed of the reasons for the delay and the expected timescale.

- 4.10 The meeting will be held as soon as is reasonably practicable by the manager designated to chair the grievance meeting ("the Chair") subject to any need to carry out prior investigations. The employee will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance, once the Chair has had a reasonable opportunity to consider how best to investigate the grievance. The School will give the employee a minimum of five working days' advance notice of the meeting in writing, and the letter will include the date, time and location of the meeting and their right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or fellow worker. HR professional to advise on process and procedure and a note taker will also be present.
- 4.11 The intention of the grievance meeting is that it should be an opportunity for discussion and dialogue, with the objective of seeking to fully understand the nature of the grievance and then to find a resolution.
- 4.12 There is no set format for this meeting. The Chair may choose to meet with the employee on more than one occasion and consider any supporting information provided. This may include the opportunity to meet together with the employee and the person the grievance is against, at the same time if the Chair considers it appropriate, after taking account of each individual's circumstances. They may need to adjourn the meeting if they need to investigate further, including interviewing potential witnesses and exploring alternative possibilities for resolution of the grievance.
- 4.13 While the employee will be given every opportunity to explain their case fully, they should confine their explanation to matters that are directly relevant to their complaint. The manager conducting the meeting will intervene if they consider that the discussion is straying too far



from the key issues, or to ensure that the meeting can be completed within a reasonable timeframe, taking account of the nature and complexity of the complaint.

- 4.14 After considering all relevant information, the Chair may:
- uphold the grievance in full;
 - uphold part of the grievance;
 - not uphold the grievance; or
 - identify actions or recommendations intended to resolve concerns or improve working relationships.

Where evidence indicates a potential breach of the School's Code of Conduct or another School policy, the matter may be referred for consideration under the appropriate procedure.

- 4.15 Where possible, the Chair will meet the employee, and where appropriate the individual the grievance is against, either separately or together, to inform them of the decision and if applicable, outline any proposed action(s) that will be taken. Mediation may be appropriate at this stage (see above).

- 4.16 The Chair will confirm their decision in writing, within three working days. This letter will also confirm the employee's right to appeal if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome. Where an outcome letter cannot reasonably be issued within the stated timescale, the employee will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with an updated anticipated timescale.

Grievance appeal

- 4.17 If the employee remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the grievance, they may appeal in writing within five working days of receiving the written outcome. The appeal should be submitted to the person identified in the outcome letter or, where appropriate, to the Clerk to Governors or another designated senior person. The employee should clearly state the grounds of their appeal, including why they believe the original decision was incorrect, unreasonable or procedurally flawed.
- 4.18 The chair of the appeal meeting should be more senior to the manager who heard the grievance and will have had no prior involvement. Normally this would be the Headteacher. The chair will be advised by an HR professional and a note taker will also be present.
- 4.19 The chair of the appeal meeting will make arrangements for a meeting to be convened as soon as reasonably practical. They will write to the employee confirming arrangements for the meeting, giving a minimum of five working days' notice, including details of the date, time and location of the meeting and the employee's right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- 4.20 The employee should ensure that they attend the meeting at the specified time. If the employee is unable to attend because of circumstances beyond their control, they should inform the chair of the appeal meeting of this as soon as possible. If the employee fails to attend without explanation, or if it appears that they have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the meeting may take place in their absence.



- 4.21 The purpose of the appeal is to consider the grounds of appeal; this could for example be to determine if the previous decision was sound, to consider any new facts that have come to light since the meeting and/or to judge reasonableness of the process, such as the thoroughness of the investigation.
- 4.22 The decision at the appeal stage will be confirmed in writing to the employee within three working days of the meeting. It may also be appropriate to consider mediation at this stage (see above). Where an appeal outcome cannot reasonably be issued within the stated timescale, the employee will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with an updated anticipated timescale.
- 4.23 The outcome of the appeal is final. There is no further right of appeal.

5. Collective grievances

- 5.1 All colleagues raising a collective grievance must agree (without any pressure being exerted on staff members to join the collective process) to deal with the concern as a collective grievance. All participating colleagues will be entitled to only one grievance meeting and (if applicable) one appeal meeting. All participating colleagues will be notified individually of the outcome at each stage of the process. If all the colleagues do not entirely voluntarily agree to this arrangement, or if their grievances are not identical, the School will arrange to hear their grievances on an individual basis.
- 5.2 If the participating colleagues are all members of the same trade union, the trade union representative can (if all participating colleagues wish them to do so) raise the grievance on their behalf. Alternatively, the participating colleagues can agree to nominate one of them to act on behalf of everyone. If no representative has been nominated, the participating colleagues will be entitled to address concerns individually at the grievance meeting, but they will have no additional right to be accompanied beyond having their participating colleagues present. If the colleagues wish to be represented by their trade union representatives on an individual basis, the School will arrange to hear their grievances individually.
- 5.3 When submitting a collective grievance, the written complaint should be headed "Formal collective grievance". Guidance for employees on what to include in a collective grievance letter is available in School or from HR. The grievance can be submitted on one document, but it must:
- identify each colleague who wishes to raise the grievance;
 - identify any nominated trade union representative or colleague who represents everyone;
 - confirm that all employees have voluntarily consented to have the grievance considered collectively; and
 - confirm that everyone understands that the grievance will give each colleague the right to only one collective grievance meeting, one identical outcome and (if applicable), one appeal meeting and one identical appeal outcome.
- 5.4 The grievance meeting and the grievance appeal meeting (if there is one) will be conducted in the same way as for an individual grievance meeting, with the exception of arrangements for representation (as detailed in paragraph 5.2).



6. Data protection and retention of employee records

- 6.1 The School processes personal data collected during informal complaints and the formal Grievance Policy in accordance with its data protection policy. Such data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of responding to the complaints or conducting the Grievance Policy. Records relating to grievances will be retained securely in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy and records retention arrangements. 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 Schools [Disciplinary Procedure](#).
- 6.2 The School may have to disclose personal data to third parties where appropriate, including but not limited to the police, regulatory bodies and any transfer under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE).

***RBC model policy
S Greenaway Sept 2026***

Appendix

A: Guidance for employees on what to include in a grievance letter - Schools

The way you present your grievance letter can help to get a problem sorted out more quickly.

This guidance can help to make sure that your letter includes all the relevant information. It also includes additional information which needs to be included in a collective grievance letter, if appropriate.

It is a good idea to seek advice from your Trade Union representative, if you are a member of one, before you submit your grievance. You can also seek advice from the HR team or from another colleague.

What to put in your grievance letter

- your name, address and contact number
- make sure the grievance is addressed to the appropriate person. Normally, this will be your line manager. If your grievance concerns your line manager, it should be sent to the next appropriate senior manager or the Headteacher. If the grievance concerns the Headteacher, it should be sent to the Chair of Governors.
- clearly set out the key facts of your complaint. Say what happened and try to include the following details:
 - the date and time of incidents
 - where they took place



- the names of the people involved
 - the names of any witnesses.
- if your complaint is that you have not been paid, or not paid enough, set out how much you think the school owes you
- if your complaint is about a series of events, try to set them out in the order in which they took place
- if you can't remember an exact date, but know that it happened before a certain event, just say that. For example, you could say 'A few days before I went on leave on 14 February ...', or 'Just before the Christmas party'
- try to give job titles for anyone else involved in your grievance
- set out any evidence you have to support your complaint. You can include any information you have in your letter, or say that you have it and can provide it if needed. For example, you may have documents showing how much you should be paid, or a statement from someone who was in the same situation as you but was treated differently
- set out what resolution you are hoping to achieve from raising your concerns. For example, you may want training, to be moved to a different role, or for your employer to provide certain equipment to accommodate a disability.
- if you have tried to resolve the matter informally first, for example, by talking to your line manager, set out what happened. If anything was agreed then, but has not resolved the situation, say why it didn't work
- try to keep your letter to the point. You need to give enough detail for the person looking into your concerns to be able to investigate your complaint properly. Going off the point can be confusing and might not help your case
- explain how you felt about the behaviour you are complaining about
- sign and date the letter.

Additional information for collective grievances

In addition to the points above, when submitting a collective grievance, the written complaint should be headed "Formal collective grievance". The grievance can be submitted on one document, but it must:

- identify each colleague who wishes to raise the grievance;
- identify any nominated trade union representative or colleague who represents everyone;
- confirm that all employees have voluntarily consented to have the grievance considered collectively; and
- confirm that everyone understands that the grievance will give each colleague the right to only one collective grievance meeting, one identical outcome and (if applicable), one appeal meeting and one identical appeal outcome.

B: Grievance Policy FAQs for Staff

1. What is a grievance?



A grievance is a formal way to raise concerns or complaints you have about your work, working conditions, treatment at work, or how you've been managed. It might relate to relationships with colleagues, decisions made about your role, or actions you feel are unfair.

2. Should I raise concerns informally first?

Yes – where appropriate. Many concerns can be resolved quickly and effectively through open, informal conversations with your line manager or a senior colleague. The policy encourages informal resolution as the first step, unless the issue is very serious or sensitive.

3. Can I raise a grievance about someone else's behaviour?

Yes, if it affects your ability to work or has a significant impact on you. If your concern relates to bullying, harassment or discrimination, it may be considered under this Grievance Policy or another relevant School policy or procedure, depending on the nature of the concern.

4. How do I raise a formal grievance?

You should submit your concerns in writing to your headteacher or line manager, clearly outlining:

- What your concern is
- When and where it happened
- Who was involved
- What outcome you are seeking

Grievances can also be submitted electronically (e.g. by email).

5. Can I bring someone with me to meetings?

Yes. For all formal grievance meetings, you have the right to be accompanied by a **trade union representative** or a **workplace colleague**.

6. What if my grievance is against my manager?

You should raise your grievance with the next appropriate senior manager or the Headteacher. If your grievance concerns the Headteacher, it should be directed to the Chair of Governors.



7. Will my grievance be kept confidential?

Yes. Everyone involved is expected to handle grievances with sensitivity and confidentiality. However, the people who need to know in order to resolve the matter may be informed.

8. What happens after I raise a grievance?

A manager will review your grievance and may:

- Suggest informal resolution or mediation
- Carry out an investigation
- Hold a grievance meeting to hear your concerns

You will be given a written outcome and, if you're not satisfied, you have the right to appeal.

9. Will I be treated unfairly for raising a grievance?

No. You will **not be victimised or treated unfairly** for raising a grievance in good faith. If this does occur, it should be reported—it may itself be treated as a disciplinary matter.

10. What if I need support?

You can speak to:

- Your **trade union representative**
- Your **line manager** or another trusted colleague
- A member of the **SLT**
- Your **school's HR provider or link governor** (for governance-level grievances)