

Contents (click on the section you want to read)

What is the policy about?	1
Who does it apply to?	2
What do I need to know or do?	2
Informal grievances	2
Formal grievances	2
Appeal	5
The appeal process	5
Appeal outcome	6
Mediation	6
Leavers	7
Collective grievances	7
Record keeping	7
Support available	7
Where can I find more information?.....	8

What is the policy about?

People are at the heart of Supporting Education Group. It's our aim to create an environment and employee experience, which inspires and encourages our people to do their best work. We spend a significant portion of our lives at work, and we believe it's really important to make this as enjoyable as possible.

We're really passionate about promoting a culture of openness and inclusivity, where you feel able to discuss concerns (grievances) that you have, regardless of who and what the concerns are about, and that they will be treated sensitively and taken seriously.

You'll not be subject to any detrimental or less favourable treatment as a result of raising concerns. We ideally want them to be raised as soon as possible and dealt with quickly and informally. Sometimes an informal route isn't possible, and a formal approach is needed. If this is the case, we'll investigate concerns in a sensitive, full and fair way.

This policy is non contractual and may be changed in the future.

Who does it apply to?

This policy applies to any employees within our group of companies. Individual managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied within their own area.

What do I need to know or do?

A grievance is a concern that someone may raise about their work, working environment or interactions with others. This policy tells you how to raise your concerns both informally and formally, it's not a route of appealing a decision made in another formal process (such as disciplinary, flexible working or redundancy).

Informal grievances

Informal chats can often quickly solve problems without the need for a formal process to be followed. You're encouraged to approach your manager first to talk about your concerns.

The informal chat could be a quiet word or a more structured meeting. Resolving concerns should be a two-way process, so your manager should allow you to explain your thoughts, and in turn you should also listen to what they have to say. It may not always be possible to solve the concerns in the way you'd like, but hopefully you can find a mutual solution.

You can submit a formal grievance if you're not happy with how the informal grievance had been handled or with the outcome of it, or if you feel it's not appropriate to raise the grievance informally.

Formal grievances

Raising concerns

To raise a grievance formally you need to ideally put it in writing to your manager, we encourage you not to delay doing this.

If your grievance is about your manager, then you should write to your manager's manager or to the People Hub. Any formal grievance should say the nature and extent of your concerns, including relevant facts, dates and names of individuals involved and what resolution you'd like.

If the grievance is about individual(s), you need to be aware that they will be told that a grievance has been raised and what the concerns are. They will be given the opportunity to tell their side of the story. If the matter becomes a formal disciplinary matter, then any evidence that's gathered will need to be shared with them.

If you've already raised and had an outcome on a formal grievance (including an appeal), we won't reinvestigate it again through a new grievance being raised. Grievances raised about matters from more than six months ago may be rejected unless there's reasons which justify the delay, and the concerns can be properly investigated and resolved.

If a grievance is raised during a disciplinary process, we may decide to look into both matters at the same time or if appropriate we may look at any concerns before a disciplinary outcome is reached.

The grievance meeting

Your grievance will normally be investigated by your manager unless it's about them in which case it will be run by another manager. Additionally, if your grievance is about someone more senior than your manager, another more senior manager will investigate your grievance. They'll let you know that they've received your grievance and invite you to a grievance meeting, this is your opportunity to discuss your concerns in detail so please be prepared. The manager running the meeting will usually ask you any questions they may have.

The meeting will take place without unreasonable delay, it will normally take place within 10 working days. We'll always give a minimum of 48 hours' notice of the meeting; it'll often be more than this. You can have a companion with you (a colleague/Trade Union rep – see our companion guidance for more information), and you need to make every effort to be there.

If there's a reasonable explanation why you or your companion cannot attend the meeting, you need to let the manager running it know as soon as possible. If this is the case the meeting will be reorganised, usually within five days of the original date.

If you fail to attend without explanation or if it appears you've not made sufficient attempts to attend, the grievance meeting may take place in your absence.

Where it's not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting, we'll run the meeting remotely and ensure that all those participating have access to the necessary technology.

If you've got any documents or evidence, please share these with the manager at least two working days before the meeting.

Your grievance will be reviewed as quickly as possible and can include speaking to other people, looking into facts and history. The manager should let you know how long they think it will take them to do this and reach an outcome.

Where further investigation is not required, a decision will be confirmed, usually within five working days of the meeting. If more investigation is needed, the manager may complete the investigation or allocate someone to do so and report back to them, this will be done as quickly as possible. A further meeting with you may be needed to clarify points or you'll be asked to give written answers to any questions the manager may have.

The timescales outlined above will be followed as much as possible but there may be circumstances outside of either parties' control, for example, where a key witness is unavailable, or the grievance requires extensive investigation. Where it's not possible to keep to the usual timeframes, the manager will keep you informed of progress.

Grievance outcome

Once a decision has been reached, you'll be told of the outcome in writing. Sometimes the manager may decide to meet with you to talk it through.

The outcome will be that the manager either supports the points of your grievance, they support some of the points raised or they do not support any of the points raised. The grievance outcome will also say if any further actions need to be taken. You have the right to appeal the decision.

Appeal

If you wish to appeal a decision, you'll need to put your grounds for appeal in writing, ideally sending this electronically. You'll be told who to appeal to in your outcome letter and you need to do this within 5 working days of receiving it. You can appeal on:

- Process – how this was followed, whether it was followed correctly and fairly
- Decision making – how the outcome was reached, whether the outcome was fair and proportionate
- Any new information – that wasn't available before

If you don't submit your appeal within the timeframe given, then you'll lose your right to appeal and if you don't provide sufficient grounds to your appeal, we may decide not to hear it.

The appeal process

An independent manager will be asked to look at your appeal. It'll usually be a more senior manager but could be someone at the same level as the original decision maker; the main thing is that they've not been involved before.

They'll let you know that they've received your appeal and invite you to an appeal meeting, this is your opportunity to discuss your points of appeal in detail so please be prepared. The manager running the meeting will usually ask you any questions they may have.

The meeting will take place without unreasonable delay, it will normally take place within ten working days. We'll always give a minimum of 48 hours' notice of the meeting; it'll often be more than this. You can have a companion with you (a colleague/Trade Union rep – see our companion guidance for more information), and you need to make every effort to be there.

If there's a reasonable explanation why you or your companion cannot attend the meeting, you need to let the manager running it know as soon as possible. If this is the case the meeting will be reorganised, usually within five days of the original date. If you fail to attend without explanation or if it appears you've not made sufficient attempts to attend, the appeal meeting may take place in your absence.

If you've got any further documents or evidence, please share these with the manager at least two working days before the meeting.

Your appeal will be reviewed as quickly as possible and can include speaking to other people, looking into facts and history. The manager should let you know how long they think it will take them to do this and reach an outcome.

Where further investigation is not required, a decision will be confirmed, usually within five working days of the meeting. If more investigation is needed, the manager may complete the investigation or allocate someone to do so and report back to them, this will be done as quickly as possible.

A further meeting with you may be needed to clarify points or alternatively you'll be asked to give written answers to any questions the manager may have.

The timescales outlined above will be followed as much as possible but there may be circumstances outside of either parties' control, for example, where a key witness is unavailable, or the appeal requires extensive investigation.

Where it's not possible to keep to the usual timeframes, the manager will keep you informed of progress.

Appeal outcome

Once a decision has been reached, you'll be told of the outcome in writing. Sometimes the manager may decide to meet with you to talk it through. The decision they make will be final and there's no further right of appeal.

The outcome will be that the manager either supports the points of your appeal, they support some of the points raised or do not support any of the points raised. The appeal outcome will also say if any further actions need to be taken.

Mediation

We may decide to seek assistance from internal or external mediators at any stage. Where all parties agree to undertake mediation, the grievance process will be paused whilst this is ongoing. If mediation is unsuccessful the grievance process will be resumed at the point it was originally paused.

Leavers

If you have a grievance but you're leaving our employment or you've already left, you need to put it in writing to your manager, your manager's manager, or the People Hub

This needs to be done as soon as possible but at the latest within eight weeks of you leaving. We'll consider the best approach to handle your grievance and we may decide that it's still appropriate to consider it in line with our formal stage.

Alternatively, we may think it's more appropriate to respond to you in writing or may consider it inappropriate to investigate further as you're no longer an employee.

Collective grievances

If a group wish to raise a grievance together, we'll ask the group to choose a representative.

Depending on how your concern is raised, we'll follow our informal or formal grievance stage. Your representative will be expected to involve and give feedback to the rest of the group.

Record keeping

Accurate notes that reflect the discussion should be taken at all stages of any formal process; these will not be word for word.

We usually provide a note taker to capture meeting notes at formal meetings, we don't allow meetings to be taped, digitally recorded or videoed without everyone's consent to do so. If everyone agrees then meetings may be recorded to allow for a digitised transcription of the meeting. These notes along with any other documentation will be kept securely on your file.

Support available

We'll always try and deal with grievances as quickly as possible and we encourage you to do the same. We understand that raising or being part of a grievance may be a difficult experience, no matter how well it's carried out. If you have any concerns speak to your manager or another manager.

We also have our Employee Assistance Programme, which gives you free and confidential advice and support.

Where can I find more information?

- Companion guidance
- Witness guidance
- Note taking guidance
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Conduct Improvement (Disciplinary) policy

If you have any questions about this policy, please ask your manager or the People Hub at peoplehub@supportingeducation.com

	Job Title	Date
Prepared by	People Hub	April 2025
Signed off by	People Senior Leadership Team	April 2025
Next review due	People Hub	June 2026

