

School Employee Grievance Guidelines & Checklist

These guidelines and checklist relate to an internal grievance policy for school staff to use in relation to internal concerns and complaints.

1 Key definitions

Grievance	A grievance exists when one person or party has a complaint about another person's decision, action, or failure to act
Complainant	The person who has a complaint against a person who is employed by or acts on behalf of the School

2 Key Principles

2.1 Grievances raised should be dealt with in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) Only the people directly involved in investigating or adjudicating a grievance will have access to information about the grievance.
- (b) All parties will have a chance to put their point of view.
- (c) All grievances will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

2.2 The resolution process should include or be consistent with the following:

- (a) Confidentiality will be respected and maintained, as far as is possible, by all parties concerned.;
- (b) The school will be open to the concerns raised by staff;
- (c) Complaints will be received in a positive manner;
- (d) Information that will assist in the resolution of a complaint will be clear and readily available;
- (e) Concerns will be dealt with speedily and those who have raised them will be kept informed about progress;
- (f) Staff will not receive adverse treatment because they have raised a complaint;
- (g) Clear confidential files and logs will be kept;
- (h) Resolution of the matter will be sought;
- (i) Staff training for managers and HR will cover the handling of complaints.

3 Recommended Process

3.1 Step One – Initial direct informal discussion about grievance

- (a) A Complainant should try to sort out the grievance directly with the person involved, by phone and/or a face to face meeting.
- (b) The school may like to have a supervisor or member of the HR team present at the discussion between the Complainant and the other employee to assist with the issue, if appropriate.

3.2 Step Two - Escalation of informal discussion

- (a) If resolution of an issue is not achieved at Step 1, or the Complainant does not feel it is appropriate to have an informal discussion, the issue can be raised with the Manager of the relevant school employee and/or a member of the HR team. If the concern relates to the Principal, the issue can be raised with the Board.
- (b) The concerns raised will be dealt with by the Manager or Board as appropriate. If required, the complaint will be investigated and handled with the relevant due diligence and addressed in an equitable and unbiased manner.

3.3 Step Three – Lodgement of a formal Grievance

- (a) This step is used when the Complainant:
 - (i) is not satisfied with the outcome in step 2; and
 - (ii) wishes to lodge a detailed, written and formal complaint.
- (b) To commence this process, the Complainant can lodge a grievance to HR in writing, by letter or email. If the grievance relates to the Principal, it can be lodged with the Board.
- (c) So that HR or the Board can appropriately respond, the written grievance should include details of the concern including relevant times and dates and the people involved.
- (d) All formal complaints will be treated seriously. HR/the Board will determine the most appropriate method of dealing with the grievance, to ensure confidentiality of the process and that the appropriate people within the School are involved.
- (e) Once a Grievance has been received an acknowledgement of receipt will be issued.

3.4 Step Four – Investigation

- (a) The Grievance will be investigated confidentially and in an equitable and unbiased manner, as deemed appropriate by the School.
- (b) The School will inform the Complainant in writing about the outcome of the investigation, to the extent appropriate noting procedural fairness and confidentiality obligations.

3.5 Step Five – Appeal

- (a) If the Complainant is not satisfied by the decision made following the investigation, the Complainant can appeal in writing.
- (b) The School should not offer unlimited opportunities for appeal if a Complainant is unhappy with the resolution of a complaint. Any appeal against the resolution of a complaint should be made in writing to the Principal. An appeal is only likely to be considered if there is evidence there was a procedural problem with the investigation. The Principal, at his/her discretion, will consider the application for an appeal and will either direct the complaint be re-examined or direct the matter be closed.

3.6 Step Six – External resolution

- (a) If the Complainant is not satisfied by outcome of the review or the complaint remains unresolved, they may pursue external resolution alternatives.

School Employee Grievance Checklist

The manner of dealing with a grievance

- Have only the people directly involved in investigating or adjudicating a grievance had access to information about the grievance?
- Have all parties had a chance to put their point of view?
- Has the grievance been dealt with as quickly as possible?

Initial direct informal discussion about grievance

- Has the Complainant tried to sort out the grievance directly with the person involved first?
- Has a supervisor or member of the HR team been advised of the discussion to assist with the issue?
- Has the grievance been discussed between the Complainant and the other person involved?

Escalation of information discussion

- Was a resolution not achieved via informal discussion?
- Is the Complainant not comfortable raising the issue directly with the other person involved in the issue?
- Has the Complainant raised the grievance with their direct Manager?
- Has the grievance been discussed between the Complainant and direct Manager?
- Does the complaint need to be investigated?
- Has the complaint been investigated and handled with the relevant due diligence and addressed in an equitable and unbiased manner?

Lodgement of a formal Grievance

- Is the Complainant not satisfied with the outcome of the discussion with their direct Manager?
- Has HR received a formal Grievance in writing, by letter or email from the Complainant?
- Does the formal Grievance included details of the concern including relevant times, dates and people involved?

- Has the Complainant received an acknowledgement of receipt of the formal Grievance?
- Has HR determined the most appropriate method of dealing with the Grievance, to ensure confidentiality of the process and that the appropriate people within the School are involved?

Investigation of Grievance

- Has the school determined whether in internal investigator or external investigator is appropriate, based on the circumstances and in accordance with school policy?
- Have the people involved been informed of what the investigation process will be and likely timeframes?
- Has the Grievance been investigated confidentially and in an equitable and unbiased manner as deemed appropriate by the School?
- Has the School informed the Complainant in writing about the outcome of the investigation, to the extent appropriate noting procedural fairness and confidentiality obligations?

Appeal

- Is the Complainant not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation?
- Has the Principal received a formal appeal against the resolution of a complaint in writing, by letter or email?
- Has the Principal considered the application for an appeal?
- Has the Principal at his/her discretion directed the complaint to be re-examined?
- Has the Principal at his/her discretion directed the matter to be closed?

External Resolution

- Has the Complainant pursued external resolution alternatives as they are not satisfied by the outcome of the review?
- Has the School pursued external resolution alternatives as the complaint remains unresolved?