

Grievance Policy

Policy	It is the policy of the Company to provide a fair and impartial framework for resolving employee complaints and grievances.
Rationale	The aim of this policy is to enable a fair, sensitive, transparent and quick resolution of any concern, problem, complaint or grievance an employee may have about practice, policy or treatment relating to your employment and to produce a speedy resolution where genuine problems exist and where possible, without undue delay and at the earliest possible stage of the procedure.
General Principles	<p>Although it may not be possible to solve all grievances to everyone's complete satisfaction, all grievances will be objectively and constructively dealt with by the Company and anyone who decides to use the procedure may do so with the confidence that the grievance will be dealt with fairly.</p> <p>The Company's mediation policy may be proposed at any stage, by any parties or the Company, as an alternative resolution mechanism (see Mediation Policy).</p>
Resolving Grievances	You are expected to make every effort to resolve grievances directly with the person/people concerned and at the earliest possible stage. The grievance procedure should only be used when these efforts are ineffective.
Stage 1: Informal Procedure	<p>Where possible, employees are expected to make reasonable efforts to resolve grievances directly with the person/people concerned. Failing that, the grievance should be discussed with your manager who may attempt to resolve matters informally.</p> <p>The informal procedure shall be seen only as a proactive support to prevent a situation from deteriorating further and an opportunity to resolve a difficult situation with the minimum of conflict and stress for all the individuals concerned. It does not replace the Company's mediation policy or formal grievance procedures.</p> <p>Your manager or other suitable person, may meet both parties either individually or collectively to address the grievance and establish if the grievance can be immediately addressed. This will be conducted in a confidential and non-confrontational basis, with a view to resolving the issue in an informal, low-key manner.</p> <p>A record of the discussions noting any agreements reached may be made and a copy given to the employees. A copy may also be placed on the HR file of all employees involved.</p> <p>If the informal process fails or either party disputes the grievance, the Company's mediation policy or formal grievance procedures may be used.</p>
Stage 2: Formal Procedure	The complainant employee will raise the matter, in writing, with their manager.

Classified: Confidential

Where, for objectively justifiable reasons such as where the grievance relates to the manager, the grievance should be raised with a manager one level higher, as appropriate.

The complainant employee may be invited to attend an investigatory meeting.

Following the investigatory meeting, the complainant employee will be given details of the investigating manager's decision(s). Where appropriate, the decision in question will be communicated to the complainant employee in writing.

The Company will make every reasonable effort to resolve the grievance within 10 working days and likewise, try to ensure that any decisions will be communicated to the complainant employee within 15 working days from the grievance having been received. However, these are only indicative timeframes and will not be allowed to prevent the Company from completing a fair and thorough investigation. The complainant employee is therefore asked to be patient in this regard.

In appropriate cases and with the agreement of both parties, the investigating manager may suggest facilitation or mediation of grievances with a view to ensuring an acceptable outcome for all of those involved (see Mediation Policy).

Stage 3: Appeal

If a complainant employee still feels that the grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily, the employee may appeal the grievance to management.

The complainant employee will raise the matter, in writing, to management within 10 working days of receiving the original investigatory manager's decisions. The complainant employee should give full details of the grievance and should include the reason(s) why they feel dissatisfied with the response received at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2 above.

The complainant employee will then be invited to attend an appeal hearing by management or their nominee. Following the hearing, where determined appropriate and after any further investigatory interviews with any witnesses and respondent, the complainant employee will be given details of management's or their nominee's decision in relation to the grievance. Where appropriate, the decision in question will be communicated to the complainant employee in writing.

The decision of management or their nominee will be final.

The Company will make every reasonable effort to ensure that any decisions are communicated to the complainant employee within 15 working days from the appeal having been received. However, these are only indicative timeframes and will not be allowed to prevent a complete, fair and thorough investigation. The complainant employee is therefore asked to be patient in this regard.

Exhausting Each Stage of the Procedure

If you have a grievance you must exhaust each stage of the procedure before proceeding to the next stage. A grievance will not be escalated to the next stage until the preceding stage has been exhausted.

Exhaustion of Internal Mechanisms

If you feel that the response of the Company is not satisfactory you may refer the grievance to the appropriate external body.

Investigations

At the sole discretion of the Company, the nature, type and complexity of a grievance issue will determine the extent and scope of any investigation.

Any investigations will be conducted by an impartial person, appointed by the Company, who has not been directly involved in the grievance issue(s).

Any investigation will be conducted in a thorough, objective, sensitive, fair, impartial and confidential manner with due respect for the right of all persons involved and will take account the principles of natural justice.

The Company may appoint an independent external third party to undertake any investigation on the Company's behalf.

Failure by an employee to co-operate fully in an investigation may in itself result in disciplinary action, up to and possibly including dismissal (see Disciplinary Policy).

Representation

Employees may be accompanied by a work colleague or friend of the employee's own choice at any investigatory interviews, appeal hearings or other meetings (excluding mediation) held in relation to the grievance.

The accompanier may support the employee, act as a witness, take minutes on the employee's behalf, address the meeting, advise the employee and confer with the employee during the meeting. The employee may also elect to have this person present the grievance on their behalf.

Written Statements

You and any other parties concerned with the grievance issue may be asked to prepare written statements detailing the nature of the grievance and their involvement or response. These statements may form the basis for all future discussions.

Records

The Company will keep a written record of each meeting, which may include details of your case, management's response and the outcome of the meeting. You will be asked to agree and sign the record of the meeting after consultation with your accompanier. Copies of the record will be given to everyone who attended the meeting.

General Provisions

The Company cannot and will not investigate anonymous grievance complaints. This is particularly the case where the complaint has the potential to impact negatively on the reputation or continued employment of another employee.

This procedure does not replace the appeals procedure that exists within the Company's Disciplinary Policy.

Complaints about discrimination, harassment and bullying shall be dealt with under the Company's Dignity-at-Work Policy.

Classified: Confidential

All matters relating to the grievance procedure are strictly confidential to the parties and to those who accompany them. Breaches of this confidentiality may in itself result in disciplinary action, up to and possibly including dismissal. (See Disciplinary Policy).

Employees need not fear that they will be victimised in any way for submitting a grievance or otherwise being involved in a grievance investigation. However, where grievances are found to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious this may result in disciplinary action, up to and possibly including dismissal (see Disciplinary Policy) or may be addressed through the Company's Probationary Policy. This should not, however, deter employees from raising a genuine grievance taken in good faith.