Connected Futures Partnership

Queen's Park Primary School
Hallfield Primary School
Oxford Gardens Primary School
Essendine Primary School
Dorothy Gardner Nursery School
Mary Paterson Nursery School
Tachbrook Nursery School
Queen's Park Family Hub
Bayswater Children's Centre

Grievance Policy
(Adopted from WCC Policy as used by Westminster HR)

Approved by:	London Community Education Federation Governing Body	**Date:** January 2026
Last reviewed on:	January 2026	
Next review due by:	January 2027	

Summary

The Council recognises that a healthy working environment and good working relationships have a positive impact on employee well-being and employee engagement. There is no real substitute for good day-to-day relationships for the solution of work related problems.

The council believes that all employees should be treated fairly and with respect, and will not tolerate any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation.

This policy provides a framework to settle grievances and to stop any behaviour that is causing offence or distress to employees quickly, fairly, confidentially and sensitively. It also outlines ways to resolve such grievances as early as possible, recognising that this is best for everyone involved.

Principles

The council recognises that going through a formal procedure can be a stressful and upsetting experience for all parties involved. Everyone involved in the process

is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect.

- All employees involved in the grievance process must maintain confidentiality.
- This policy covers all Westminster City Council employees.
- Employees can be accompanied by a colleague or trade union official at all stages of this process.
- Employees should raise a grievance within 3 months of the 'incident' having happened.
- Grievances submitted will be assumed to have been made in good faith. In the event of spurious or malicious complaints/allegations being made by employees, such employees may be subject to disciplinary action.
- All meetings/appeals under this policy may take place in an agile way. If a meeting is to take place virtually then please refer to Guidance Note - Virtual Meetings.
- Employees are advised to speak to their manager, trade union representative, HR advisor or the council's confidential Employee Assistance Programme if they need further support.

Scope

What can be raised as a formal grievance?

A formal grievance can be raised by an employee if they are concerned about the way in which they have been treated by the council, managers, or colleagues acting on its behalf, and have been unable to resolve this informally.

Grievances may be concerned with a wide range of issues, including the allocation of work, the working environment or conditions, the way in which an employee has been managed or discrimination, bullying, victimisation and harassment concerns.

What will not be considered under this Policy?

If an employee has experienced discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation by members of the public or service users, the matter should be dealt with using the council's guide on Dealing with Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment by Customers.

The following issues will not be considered under this procedure:- issues that

- Relate to a term or condition of employment or are about a term or condition of employment within the written particulars of employment (this

does not affect statutory and contractual rights to raise a grievance about the application of terms and conditions)
- Relate to the grade of their post or their salary and remuneration where these have been clearly determined by the Council's policies and guides
- Have been or are being dealt with under the council's Disciplinary Code
- Are about any disciplinary action taken against an employee (this should be dealt with as an appeal under the Disciplinary Code)
- Are the subject of collective negotiation or consultation with recognised trade unions
- Are over 3 months old, (however employees may refer to earlier matters if they believe that they support the grievance)
- Are part of issues which have previously been investigated
- Are covered by statutory controls such as Income Tax, National Insurance and Pension Schemes
- Are covered by other national or local appeals procedures, such as
- Redundancy dismissals, termination of probationary period or the non renewal of fixed term contracts on their expiry

Informal Resolution

If an employee has concerns about aspects of work, they should attempt to resolve the matter informally with their line manager and/or through mediation. If these attempts are not successful, it may be appropriate to raise a formal grievance under this policy.

If an employee has a grievance about an issue relating to their employment they should first talk to their line manager on an informal basis. Employee and manager should discuss any concerns in confidence and, where possible, seek to resolve the matter quickly and

fairly through normal management processes. The emphasis is to resolve the grievance at the earliest possible stage. If the concern relates to the employee's line manager, those concerns should be raised with the line manager's manager.

What should managers do when employees first raise issues of concern?

Managers must:

- Continue to treat all employees with dignity and respect and provide a working environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation

- Try and resolve problems and grievances through the normal day to day management processes or through mediation,
- Make sure that if the employee is likely to experience difficulty with any aspect of this procedure on account of any disability that they have, or if they need assistance for another reason, appropriate arrangements and adjustments are made to accommodate this
- Deal with a grievance promptly, with no unreasonable delay to meetings, decisions or confirmation of the decisions.
- Act consistently
- Carry out necessary investigations to establish facts

What if the employee remains aggrieved after attempts at informal resolution or mediation?

Managers must:

- Make sure that where an employee wishes to make a formal grievance that this is in writing.
- Make sure they are familiar with this Policy and that all steps of the procedure, including all agreements made and notes of meetings are documented and copies placed on the employee's file
- Advise the employee that they have the right to bring an appropriate companion to any meetings under the formal procedure. The chosen companion may be a council colleague or a trade union representative.
- Implement any actions/recommendations arising from the grievance and keep the employee informed of progress
- Ensure that the work environment is free from harassment, bullying, discrimination or victimisation.
- Consider disciplinary action where offensive behaviour does not stop
- Remind employees of the support available, e.g. Employee Assistance Programme
- If you require further assistance to deal with matters you should raise this within the management structure as soon as possible.

What should employees do?

Employees must

- Treat colleagues with dignity and respect and not bully, victimise, harass or discriminate against other employees
- Make every effort to resolve the problem or grievance with their manager, or through mediation, before starting the formal grievance procedure

- Submit a formal grievance in writing (using the grievance form: Grievance Form) within 3 months of the issue or incident occurring and state their suggested remedies for resolving the situation, if they wish to raise a formal grievance
- Follow the stages of the formal procedure in sequence
- Make sure that their companion during the formal procedure does not act in a legal capacity.

What if the chosen companion is unavailable on the day scheduled for the meeting or appeal?

The employee or their companion should propose an alternative date that falls within five working days of the originally scheduled date. The new date will be considered by the manager and confirmed to the employee in writing.

Mediation

Mediation may be appropriate, depending on the nature of the grievance. Mediation will be used only where all parties involved in the grievance agree, and if either side does not wish to participate in mediation this will not be considered to be an indication of either blame or intent. It is envisaged that both parties involved in the grievance will be encouraged to consider using the mediation process as part of the informal stage of this policy.

How does Mediation work?

Mediation involves the appointment of an impartial, third-party mediator who will discuss the issues raised by an employee's grievance with all of those involved and seek to facilitate a resolution. The process is confidential and individual and joint sessions may be appropriate. Mediation allows an opportunity for both parties to explore the situation in a safe, confidential & impartial environment. Typically mediation can last up to a day and will be attended by both parties, held in a neutral, private venue. The aim is that both parties will determine a mutually satisfactory outcome although there is no obligation to reach an agreement and the employee can revert to the formal process where no solution can be reached informally with the use of mediation. Further information on mediation can be found here, or alternatively the mediation team can be contacted.

Stage 1: Formal Grievance

Employees must follow the steps below to raise a grievance formally if they are unable to resolve a problem or concern with their manager through normal management processes, or through mediation.

- Put their grievance in writing, using the Grievance Form (Grievance Form WCC.doc) without unreasonable delay
- Set out clearly the nature of the formal grievance, what attempts have been made to resolve the matter informally, and indicate the outcome that they are seeking
- Sign and date the formal grievance and submit to their manager within 3 months of the issue or incident grievance about
- If the formal grievance is about their manager, consider whether to submit the grievance to their manager's manager
- Send a copy of the written grievance to the Employee Relations HR Advisor
- Ensure that they attend the formal grievance meeting at the specified time. If they are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond their control, employees should inform their line manager as soon as possible. If they fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that they have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the meeting may take place in the employee's absence

Responding to a formal grievance

Managers must take the following action in line with the target timescales below;

The manager responding to a Stage 1 formal grievance will usually be the line manager of the employee. Where this is not possible either for reasons of time delay or if the grievance is about the employee's manager, the grievance may be heard by the line manager's manager or other suitable manager.

Action	When
Write to the employee to acknowledge receipt of the written grievance.	Within 5 working days, of receiving the written grievance
Arrange to meet the employee as soon as is reasonably practical and ideally within 15 working days of the receipt of the employee's written grievance.	Within 15 working days of receiving the written grievance

Advise the employee in writing of the date of the formal grievance meeting and that they are entitled to bring a companion to the meeting. At the meeting, ask the employee to explain the nature of their grievance and confirm the remedies being sought as set out in the formal grievance. Where appropriate, the meeting may be adjourned to allow further information to be obtained. Arrange to take notes of all meetings/interviews and give to the interviewee for any comments. These should be signed and dated.	
Consider the remedies being sought and decide on appropriate action, confirming this in writing to the employee. Managers may wish to include; ◆ Details of the grievances and the attempts to resolve the situation ◆ Their conclusion/s ◆ Recommendations, including whether the employee's suggested remedies are acceptable and any actions to be taken going forward ◆ Timescales for implementing any recommendations Where a manager considers allegations of discrimination, bullying, victimisation or harassment to be substantiated, the findings should recommend one or more of the following:- ◆ That the alleged perpetrator receives a formal letter instructing them to stop the incidents or behaviour ◆ That formal disciplinary proceedings are instigated against the alleged perpetrator under the Council's Disciplinary Code ◆ Write to the employee to inform them of the decision and any actions agreed ◆ Attach the employee's written grievance as an appendix ◆ Invite the employee to discuss this outcome informally with their line manager or Stage 1 Manager if different ◆ Notify the employee of their right of appeal. Send a copy of the letter and appendices to the HR Advisor or if it is not possible to consider the grievance and make a decision within 10 working days of the formal grievance meeting, write to the employee to keep them informed and advise when the decision will be made.	Within 10 working days of formal grievance meeting

Inform any other appropriate managers of relevant actions/recommendations from the written Stage 1 outcomes letter including timescales, to enable them to implement any actions/recommendations going forward. Keep the employee informed of progress through the actions/recommendations.	At the same time as the decision is sent to the individual

What if an employee remains unhappy with the outcome of the Stage 1 procedure?

If they are dissatisfied with the outcome, the employee may make a formal appeal. This should be done within 10 working days of the written notification of the outcome of the Stage 1.

The grievance submitted or remedy sought must not be changed or added to at any stage within the Formal Grievance Procedure, although it is noted that an alternative remedy may in the end be agreeable to both parties.

Further attempts may be made to resolve the matter informally, e.g. through mediation, depending on the nature of the grievance. However, if the employee is not satisfied with the outcome, they may insist on the matter proceeding to Stage 2 grievance.

Employees have the right to appeal against the outcome of the Stage 1 procedure. This is set out below.

Stage 2 - Grievance Appeal

Employees must:

- Put their grievance in writing, headed "Formal grievance appeal" within 10 working days of receipt of the written outcome of the Stage 1 Grievance.
- Set out clearly the grounds of their appeal, why they are not happy with the outcome and/or recommendations in the Stage 1 decision
- Also include a copy of the formal grievance meeting outcome letter with the appeal
- Sign and date the appeal, and give this to the Stage 1 manager within 10 working days of receipt of the Stage 1 decision
- Send a copy of all documents to the HR Advisor

- Ensure that they attend the appeal meeting at the specified time. If they are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond their control, employees should inform the Stage 2 manager as soon as possible. If they fail 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.
- Be aware that the outcome of the appeal meeting will be final.
- For information on the appeals hearing process, please see our appeals hearing management guide.

Manager:

The Stage 2 manager must be a ELT or SLT Member and must take the following action within the target timescales below

Action	When
Write to the employee to acknowledge receipt of the written Appeal	Within 5 working days, of receiving the written Appeal.
Advise the employee in writing of the date of the appeal and that they are entitled to bring a companion to the meeting. Consider also inviting the Stage 1 manager to the appeal.	Within 10 working days of receiving the written Appeal
Review the employee's Stage 1 written grievance and the Stage 1 decision Consider the appeal grounds that the employee has put forward and assess whether or not the conclusion reached in the original formal grievance meeting was appropriate The Appeal is not a re-hearing of the original grievance, but rather a consideration of the specific areas with which the employee is dissatisfied in relation to the original grievance. Managers may therefore confine discussion to those specific areas rather than reconsider the whole matter afresh. Managers should arrange to take notes of all meetings/interviews and give to the interviewee for any comments and to be signed and dated.	Within 20 days after receiving the written Appeal
Write to the employee to confirm their decision and any recommendations, including timescales for implementing any recommendations	Within 10 working days of hearing an Appeal

Where allegations of discrimination, bullying, victimisation or harassment are considered to besubstantiated, the appeal decision should recommend one or more of the following:- • That the alleged perpetrator receives a formal letter instructing them to stop the incidents or behaviour • That formal disciplinary proceedings are instigated against the alleged perpetrator under the Council's Disciplinary Code Inform the employee that the outcome of this appeal meeting will be final Send a copy to the HR Advisor If it is not possible to consider the grievance and make a decision within 10 working days of the Appeal Hearing, write to the employee to keep them informed and advise them when the decision will be made	
Inform the employee's manager and other appropriate managers of relevant actions or recommendations from the written Stage 1 outcomes letter, including timescales, to enable them to implement any actions/recommendations going forward. Keep the employee informed of progress through the actions/recommendations	At the same time as the decision is sent to the individual

Formal grievances raised during disciplinary proceedings

If an employee's grievance has any bearing on the disciplinary proceedings, it is expected they will raise the grievance in the course of those proceedings. (The manager receiving the grievance will refer the relevant issues to the manager considering the disciplinary.) Managers may decide both the Grievance and Disciplinary processes can run concurrently; however the council's standard practice is that grievances raised under the Grievance Policy while an employee is subject to disciplinary proceedings will usually be heard only when the disciplinary process has been completed, and then only the remaining grievance issues will be considered.

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