

Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure

Purpose

At Next Steps Ed, we are committed to fostering a positive and professional environment where staff feel supported and valued. This grievance and disciplinary procedure ensures that any concerns, disputes, or instances of misconduct are handled promptly, fairly, and consistently in line with statutory requirements and best practices. The grievance procedure provides a clear process for employees to raise concerns or complaints about their work, working environment, or relationships with colleagues or management. Our aim is to resolve grievances informally wherever possible to maintain a harmonious workplace.

Grievance Procedure

Informal Resolution

Employees are encouraged to raise grievances informally with their line manager or supervisor in the first instance. Many concerns can be resolved quickly and effectively through open communication.

Formal Grievance

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, employees can submit a formal grievance in writing to their line manager or another designated manager. The written grievance should include:

- A clear description of the issue.
- Any steps taken to resolve it informally.
- The outcome the employee is seeking.

Investigation and Hearing

- The manager will acknowledge the grievance within five working days and arrange for a thorough investigation.
- A grievance hearing will be held to allow the employee to discuss their concerns in detail.
- Employees may bring a colleague or union representative to the hearing.

Outcome and Appeal

- A written outcome will be provided within ten working days of the hearing.
- If the employee is dissatisfied, they can appeal in writing to a more senior manager or the governing body within ten working days of receiving the decision.
- The appeal will be reviewed, and a final decision will be communicated in writing.

Disciplinary Procedure

Purpose

The disciplinary procedure is designed to address issues of misconduct or poor performance while ensuring fairness and supporting staff to make improvements where possible.

Informal Action

Where minor misconduct or performance issues arise, the line manager may address them informally through coaching, feedback, or additional training. This step aims to prevent escalation and support professional growth.

Formal Disciplinary Process

If informal action is insufficient or the behaviour is more serious, the formal disciplinary process will apply. This includes the following stages:

- **Investigation:** The issue will be thoroughly investigated by a neutral manager.
- **Disciplinary Hearing:** A hearing will be convened to discuss the findings, allowing the employee to respond. The employee may bring a colleague or union representative.
- **Outcome:** Potential outcomes include a verbal or written warning, suspension, or dismissal, depending on the severity of the issue.

Gross Misconduct

For cases of gross misconduct (e.g., theft, violence, safeguarding breaches), the employee may be suspended immediately pending investigation. Dismissal without notice may follow if the allegation is upheld.

Appeals Process

Employees have the right to appeal disciplinary decisions within ten working days of receiving the outcome. Appeals will be reviewed by a senior manager or an independent panel, and a final decision will be communicated in writing.

Key Principles

- **Confidentiality:** All grievances and disciplinary matters will be handled with the utmost confidentiality to protect all parties involved.
- **Fairness:** Investigations and hearings will be conducted impartially, giving all parties an opportunity to present their case.
- **Support:** Employees may access support from their union, HR representatives, or other designated support channels throughout the process.