



**Brighter Futures**  
Educational Trust

# GRIEVANCE POLICY

**Policy Number:** 10a

**Review Committee:** Finance and Risk

**Type of Policy:** Statutory

**Review Period:** Annually

**Approved:** May 2026

**Next Review:** May 2027



## VERSION CONTROL

V1.1	April 2025	New Policy
	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corrected Employment Tribunal time limits.</li><li>• Added ACAS Early Conciliation requirement in section 11</li><li>• Updated recording meetings wording in section 12</li><li>• Added bullying and harassment</li><li>• Clarified vexatious grievance wording.</li><li>• Added Equality Act reasonable adjustments statement.</li><li>• New layout due to rebrand</li></ul>

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Brighter Futures Educational Trust (BFET) will make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 where required.

It is the Trust's policy to ensure that all employees have access to a procedure to help deal with any grievances relating to their employment fairly and without unreasonable delay. Where an employee makes us aware that they have a complaint we will hold a meeting to discuss it, carry out any necessary investigation where required, inform them in writing of the outcome, and give them a right of appeal if they are not satisfied. This procedure follows the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

Issues that may cause grievances include:

- terms and conditions of employment;
- health and safety;
- work relations;
- new working practices;
- working environment;
- organisational change;
- discrimination
- bullying and harassment

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time following consultation. The employer may also vary application of this procedure, including any time scales for action, as appropriate.

The Trust is committed to promoting a culture of dignity, respect and psychological safety at work. Grievances relating to bullying, harassment, discrimination, workload and wellbeing will be treated seriously and addressed promptly.

The policy has been implemented following consultation with staff. It has been formally adopted by the Trust.

## 2. WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY

This policy applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

### 3. USING THIS POLICY

Employees should raise matters promptly and without unreasonable delay. The employer will deal with matters in the same way.

Complaints that may amount to an allegation of misconduct on the part of another employee will be investigated in accordance with this policy and may be referred to and dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy if appropriate, and the employee will be informed if this is the case.

This Grievance Policy should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action or the outcomes of other procedures where there will be relevant appeal procedures in place. If an employee is dissatisfied with any disciplinary action, they should submit an appeal under the Disciplinary Policy. Where separate pay appeals processes exist, these should normally be used; however, grievances relating to pay processes or fairness may still be considered under this policy where appropriate.

Where an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

The Trust operates a separate Whistleblowing Policy to enable employees to report illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice. However, where an employee is directly affected by the matter in question, or where they feel they have been victimised for an act of whistleblowing, they may raise the matter under this grievance policy.

Collective grievances can be made where there are two or more employees with the same grievance. However, issues that are the subject of collective negotiation or consultation with the trade union will not be considered under this policy and should be addressed through the appropriate joint collective negotiation and consultation arrangements.

This policy should not be used in situations where the employee simply disagrees with a reasonable management instruction from a manager.

It may be appropriate for the matter to be dealt with by way of mediation, depending on the nature of the grievance. Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process which involves the appointment of a neutral third-party mediator.

Where mediation is agreed:

- It will be arranged without unreasonable delay
- Participation is voluntary for all parties
- It does not affect the employee's right to pursue the formal grievance process

#### **4. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION**

It is the aim of the Trust to deal with grievance matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat any information communicated to them in connection with grievance matters as confidential.

Covert recordings are not permitted. Requests to record meetings as a reasonable adjustment will be considered.

During any action, including any decisions taken under this procedure, the Trust will collect, process and store personal data in accordance with our data protection policy. The data will be held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the grievance procedure. Records will be kept in accordance with our Workforce Privacy Notice and in line with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation (being the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time.

The Trust will maintain appropriate records of all grievances raised, including outcomes and actions taken. Anonymised data may be reviewed by senior leaders and trustees to ensure consistency, fairness and to identify any emerging themes.

#### **5. LOW LEVEL CONCERNS**

All staff are encouraged to report complaints that amount to low level concerns. Low level concerns are defined as any concern - no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or Trust may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Examples of such behaviour could include, but is not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;

- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- humiliating children

Where staff wish to raise or report a low level concern, they should refer to the 'Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply staff, contractors and volunteers' policy in the first instance in our child protection policy .

## **6. RAISING GRIEVANCES INFORMALLY – STEP 1**

The Trust believes that most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through open communication and discussion with the line manager. We would always aim to resolve a grievance informally where possible and employees are encouraged to seek informal resolution. If an employee feels unable to speak to their manager, for example, because the complaint concerns them, then they should speak informally to the Headteacher/ CEO. If this does not resolve the issue, they should follow the formal procedure below.

Whilst we encourage the informal resolution of complaints, we recognise that this is not always possible or appropriate. In such a situation, we will consider matters that are raised and we may, depending on the severity and in discussion with you, deal with the matter formally at Step 2 (below).

Employees are encouraged to seek advice from their trade union representative or workplace colleague at an early stage, including during informal resolution.

## **7. FORMAL WRITTEN GRIEVANCES – STEP 2**

If a grievance cannot be resolved informally the employee should put it in writing and submit it to the CEO indicating that it is a formal grievance. If the grievance concerns, or is raised by, the CEO, it should be submitted to the Chair of Trustees.

The written grievance should contain a brief description of the nature of the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved. In some situations we may need to ask the employee to provide further information. They should also state what their desired outcome would be to resolve the situation. They should note that where the grievance relates to another employee, in order for them to provide a response they will be given a copy of the grievance.

## 8. INVESTIGATIONS

In some cases it may be necessary for the Trust to carry out an investigation into the grievance. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the complaint and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the employee and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. The investigation will usually be carried out by the Headteacher or someone else appointed by the CEO. In the case of an investigation into a complaint against the CEO, the Chair of Trustees will determine who will carry out the investigation.

The employee must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending interviews, as part of our investigation. Where timescales cannot be met, employees will be informed in writing with reasons and revised timelines.

The employer may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting where the employer considers this appropriate. In other cases they may hold a grievance meeting before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases we will hold a further grievance meeting with the employee after our investigation and before we reach a decision.

## 9. RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED

An employee may bring a companion to any grievance meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague. They must tell the person holding the grievance meeting who their chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting. They may also seek union advice prior to any meeting and at any stage of the process.

Should they choose to bring a companion to the hearing, they will be responsible for making these arrangements and for providing their companion with any paperwork that they require for the meeting.

At the meeting, their companion may make representations to us and ask questions, but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf. You may request an adjournment to speak to their companion privately at any time during the meeting.

Acting as a companion is voluntary and colleagues are under no obligation to do so. If they agree to do so they will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.

If their chosen companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled, the employee may propose an alternative time for the meeting to take place and so long as the alternative time is reasonable and within five working days after the original scheduled date, we will postpone the meeting. If their chosen companion will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, we may ask the employee to choose someone else.

We may, at our discretion, allow the employee to bring a companion who is not a colleague or union representative (for example, a member of their family) as a reasonable adjustment if they have a disability, or if you have difficulty understanding English.

## **10. GRIEVANCE MEETING**

The employer will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within five working days of receiving a written grievance.

The employees and their companion (if any) should make every effort to attend the grievance meeting. If you or their companion cannot attend at the time specified, they should inform us immediately and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

The purpose of a grievance meeting is to enable the employee to explain their grievance and how they think it should be resolved, and to assist us to reach a decision based on the available evidence and the representations they have made. Everyone involved in the process is entitled to be treated calmly and with respect. The Trust will not tolerate abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone taking part in grievance procedures and will treat any such behaviour as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

After an initial grievance meeting we may carry out further investigations and hold further grievance meetings as we consider appropriate. Such meetings will be arranged without unreasonable delay.

We will write to the employee, usually within five working days of the final grievance meeting, to inform them of the outcome of their grievance and any further action that we intend to take to resolve the grievance. We will also remind them of their right of appeal. Where appropriate we may hold a meeting to give them this information in person.

All parties are expected to engage in the process in a constructive and professional manner. The Trust will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made where required

## **11. APPEALS – STEP 3**

If the grievance has not been resolved to the employee's satisfaction they may appeal in writing to the CEO stating their full grounds of appeal, within five working days of the date on which the decision was sent or given to them.

We will hold an appeal meeting without unreasonable delay, normally within 10 working days of receiving their written appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by the Headteacher/ CEO who has not previously been involved in the case (although they may ask anyone previously involved to be present). Where the Headteacher/CEO has made the decision at the grievance meeting a panel of Trustees will hold the appeal meeting. The employee has a right to bring a companion to the meeting.

The employer will confirm a final decision in writing, usually within five working days of the appeal hearing. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.

Employees retain the right to pursue matters externally within statutory time limits (usually three months less one day, subject to ACAS Early Conciliation).

## **12. COLLECTIVE GRIEVANCES**

If an employee and another employee (or more than two employees) have identical grievances and all wish them to be addressed in the same grievance process, they can raise a collective grievance via this grievance procedure, but please refer to section 3 above. All the employees must agree (without any pressure being exerted on staff members to join the collective process) to do this.

If the employees do not entirely voluntarily agree to this arrangement or if the grievances are not identical, the Trust will arrange to hear the grievances on an individual basis.

If the employee and your colleagues are all members of the same trade union, their trade union representative can (if they all wish him or her to do so) raise the grievance on their behalf. Alternatively, the employees can agree to nominate one of them to act on behalf of all of them.

The collective grievance will be managed in accordance with Steps 1 to 3 above. However, the written collective grievance statement should also:

- Identify each of the employees who wish to raise the grievance;
- Identify any nominated trade union representative or colleague to represent them all;
- State that they have all voluntarily consented to use the collective grievance procedure;

- Confirm that they understand that the grievance will give each of their the right to only one collective grievance meeting, one identical outcome (if applicable), one appeal meeting and one identical appeal outcome.

If, following the grievance outcome, some employees are satisfied with the outcome and do not wish to proceed to an appeal, the request for an appeal should clearly identify those withdrawing from the process and those wishing to pursue the appeal.

### **13. DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS**

In the event the grievance is upheld (either following the hearing or after an appeal), and if there is evidence to support such a course of action, the nature of the allegations may result in the BFET instigating its disciplinary policy against individuals identified of potential misconduct as a consequence of this procedure.

Where a grievance is found to be knowingly false or raised in bad faith, this may be addressed under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

### **14. REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy is reviewed and amended annually. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.