Wincle CE Primary School

*Wincle School provides an enriching and outstanding rural education. We nurture the whole individual: body, mind and soul, inspiring rounded, happy, courageous children **who shine in all that they say and do**. Our children exhibit a passion for learning, a confident faith, a loving concern for community and an inclusive respect for all.*

Shine Like Stars' Philippians 2:15

Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure

Date updated:	Brief summary of changes:
November 2026	This was updated last year – no changes this year

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all employees of Wincle CE Primary. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time, following consultation with the recognised trade unions.

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that concerns, problems or complaints relating to employment are dealt with fairly and without unreasonable delay.

From time to time, people working in any organisation may have problems or concerns about their work, working environment or conditions that they wish to be addressed. The school is committed to promoting a positive working environment where they feel that employees can raise such issues with their headteacher both informally and formally if required. Dealing effectively with matters about work-related issues is essential for the school/academy to deliver a high-quality service and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their employees. The school believe that it is in everyone's interests to deal with grievances quickly and fairly before they can develop into major difficulties for all concerned.

Where the work issue relates to bullying or harassment, employees should refer to the Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure or the Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure. For all other, general, work-related issues, the Grievance Policy and Procedure should be followed. Issues that could cause grievances may include terms and conditions of employment, health and safety, new working practices, working environment or organisational change.

Most grievances can be resolved informally. However, if an informal approach does not resolve matters, or is not appropriate, employees may choose to raise a formal grievance.

This policy and procedure explains:

- What employees can expect from the school and what the school expects of its employees.
- How to raise and deal with an issue informally in the first instance.
- How to pursue a formal grievance if informal action has not resolved the issue.

Employees' rights under the process, including the right to be accompanied and the right to a fair hearing.

What employees can expect from the school

The school will:

- Seek to ensure that employees mental health and wellbeing is always treated as a priority and ensure that they are supported if they are facing such issues.

- Provide an environment where employees feel comfortable in discussing concerns and are able to raise issues with their headteacher.
- Provide the means for employees to formally raise a grievance where it has not proved possible to resolve the issue informally or through mediation.
- Ensure that matters are dealt with promptly and confidentially at every stage.
- Ensure that matters raised are fully investigated and that those involved have the opportunity to put their side of the story before any decision is made.
- Ensure all those involved in the grievance procedure are courteous and respectful towards each other and will challenge those not observing this.
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times.

The headteacher is key to enabling the school's commitment.

What the school expect of the employees

The school expects employees to:

- Wherever possible, seek to resolve the issue informally in the first instance and at the earliest opportunity.
- Be prepared to be honest and upfront about their concerns and co-operate in seeking to arrive at a solution.
- Be open to mediation as a means of resolving their grievance.
- Submit their grievance in writing where they wish to pursue it on a formal basis and request help with this if required Co-operate with any investigation.
- Be courteous and respectful throughout the grievance procedure.
- Have realistic expectations of what can or cannot be achieved by raising a grievance.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

Exceptions

A number of the school's policies (e.g., Disciplinary, Capability, Sickness Absence etc.) carry their own separate rights of appeal. In these circumstances, the relevant appeals process should be followed. This Grievance Policy and Procedure should not be used to avoid or supplement those appeal processes.

The school also reserves the right to decline to open a fresh formal procedure in respect of a previous grievance, which has already been investigated and heard under this procedure and the facts of the matter and/or circumstances have not altered substantially. Further dialogue with employees in these circumstances would take place before a decision is made.

If employees have a grievance related to ongoing disciplinary proceedings against them, they should raise this in the course of the disciplinary procedure, e.g., during the disciplinary hearing or appeal stage. However, if they raise a grievance during disciplinary proceedings which is unrelated, then the disciplinary and grievance procedures will normally run independently in parallel.

The following concerns or complaints are also dealt with more appropriately under alternative policies and procedures:

- Complaints relating to a statutory or financial matter – such concerns over which the school has no jurisdiction should be dealt via the relevant external organisation, e.g., Pensions, HMRC, (PAYE or National Insurance) etc.
- Issues relating to bullying and harassment – these must be dealt with under the school's Dignity at Work policy and Procedure.
- Reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to school activities – (e.g., conduct which is an offence or breach of law, health and safety risks, damage to the environment, the unauthorised use

of public funds, possible fraud and corruption or unethical conduct) should be raised and dealt with under the school's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

Informal resolution

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through day-to-day discussions with employees and the headteacher. If employees have a specific concern or issue, they should request to meet with the headteacher; explain their grievance and, most importantly, what the outcome that they are seeking to achieve is.

Employees may, if they wish, also provide information in writing. The headteacher will arrange to meet with the employee at the earliest opportunity but, wherever possible, within 10 working days of their request. The meeting may be conducted in person, remotely via a video platform (e.g., Microsoft Teams) or over the phone.

At the meeting the headteacher will consider carefully the points they have raised and discuss with them how to best resolve the matter. If this does not resolve the issue, they should follow the formal procedure below.

If the employee's grievance is about their headteacher, they should raise this with another manager or the Chair of Governors.

While the school encourages the informal resolution of complaints, they recognise that it may not always be successful in resolving the matter, or they may feel that they are not able to deal with the issue in this way or they may think the nature of the grievance is too serious to be dealt with informally, in which case they may want to consider the alternative options of either mediation or making a formal complaint as set out below.

Mediation

Sometimes it can be helpful to involve an independent third party or mediator to help resolve the grievance.

Mediation is a voluntary process whereby the Mediator helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement. It can only take place where all the parties involved agree to do so. Any agreement comes from those in dispute, not from the Mediator. The Mediator is not there to judge, to say one person is right and the other wrong, or to tell those involved in the Mediation what they should do. The Mediator is in charge of the process of seeking to resolve the problem but not deciding the outcome.

If employees think that mediation may provide a suitable option to resolve a grievance, they should speak to their headteacher in the first instance.

If the other party declines the invitation to participate in mediation, the employee will be informed of this. They may then wish to consider the option of making a formal complaint.

Formal procedure

Making a formal grievance

If the employees' grievance has not been resolved informally or through mediation, they are dissatisfied with the informal action taken or if their grievance is too serious to be dealt with informally, they should raise the matter formally in writing.

If employees wish to make a formal grievance, they must do so in writing by completing form GR1 (see Appendix 1) and sending this to their headteacher/Chair of Governor's (if the grievance relates to the headteacher) who will acknowledge their complaint within 5 working days of receipt. Employees must also indicate the outcome that they are seeking, in order to resolve their grievance. In some situations, the headteacher/Chair of Governors may ask employees to provide further information.

Investigation

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

Where it is deemed necessary for the school to carry out an investigation into the employee's grievance, the headteacher (or Chair of Governors) will appoint an independent person to act as the 'Investigating Officer' and they will conduct an investigation to gather information about the grievance. In some circumstances the headteacher may look into the grievance themselves. Alternatively, it may be considered appropriate to appoint an Investigating Officer who is external to the school. The amount of investigation required and the time it will take, will depend on the nature of the grievance. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the employee and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. Employees must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing the school of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to them and attending interviews as part of the investigation.

Employees will normally be given a copy of any evidence collated during the investigation in advance of hearing their grievance.

Hearing the grievance

A formal grievance meeting (hearing) will be arranged to allow employees to put forward their case, provide any information they think is relevant and explain how they think it should be resolved. If more information comes to light, it may be necessary to adjourn the grievance meeting to conduct a further investigation and reconvene the meeting when this has been done.

The employee has the right to be accompanied by a fellow school worker, a trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union at any formal meeting (in person and virtual). Their companion may make representations at the hearing and ask questions but should not answer questions on their behalf. They may adjourn to talk privately with them at any time during the hearing. If the employee advises the school they have any disability related needs that need to be considered to enable them to participate in such a meeting, then the school will need to make any reasonable adjustments that are necessary.

Please see the 'Order of Proceedings for a Grievance Hearing' (Appendix 2) for more information.

The employee and their companion (if any) should make every effort to attend the hearing. If they or their companion cannot attend at the time specified, they should inform the Hearing Manager immediately and they will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time. If the employee fails to attend, the grievance meeting may take place in their absence, based on their written grievance statement and any other documentation available.

The outcome

The Hearing Manager will inform the employee in writing of the outcome of their grievance as soon as possible and should be no later than 30 working days of receipt of their original complaint. The employee will also be reminded of their right to appeal.

Exceptionally, there may be circumstances where it may be necessary to extend this timescale, for example where the parties involved are on leave or the scale of the investigation requires a significant amount of fact finding. In these circumstances the Hearing Manager will keep the employee updated on a regular basis on the progress of the investigation and the revised timescale.

Appeal

Employees have the right to appeal against the outcome of their grievance if it has not been resolved to their satisfaction. If employees wish to appeal, they must do so in writing, including the reasons for the appeal, within 10 working days of receipt of the letter confirming the decision and send it to the Chair of

Governors in the first instance. Their appeal letter should clearly state the full grounds of the appeal, i.e., the basis on which they consider that their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved. If the grounds of their appeal are unclear, the school may ask them to clarify these before they hold a grievance appeal hearing.

Appeals will be dealt with impartially and will be heard by the Governing Board's Appeals panel, who have had no previous involvement in the process and will aim to hear it within 30 working days following the receipt of the appeal.

Employees will be given the opportunity to put forward their case and explain why they are not satisfied with the outcome. They have the right to be accompanied by a fellow school worker, a trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union.

Please see the 'Order of Proceedings for a Grievance Appeal Hearing' (Appendix 3) for more information.

The decision of the appeal panel will be final. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.

Malicious or vexatious complaints

The school accept that all formal complaints should be accepted in good faith and investigated accordingly. However, where an investigation finds that any employee deliberately provided false information or otherwise acts in bad faith as part of an investigation, they may be subject to action under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Timescales

In the best interests of all concerned, it is important that the investigation and resolution of the grievance are completed as promptly as possible.

Employees are encouraged to raise their concerns within three months of the event occurring or final event where there is a sequence of events. However, this should not deter them from highlighting issues which occurred prior to this timescale, which form a sequence or pattern of events and give substance to the grievance.

All those involved in grievance process must give appropriate priority to the complaint and should always make every effort to adhere to any specified time limits to enable expedition of the process.

Exceptionally, there may be circumstances where it may be necessary to extend timescales. In these circumstances, the employee will be updated on a regular basis on the progress and any revised timescales.

Recording of meetings

A written record of all meetings conducted under this procedure will be made, either by the person holding the meeting or by an additional person arranged by the school to take notes.

The employee, or the person acting on their behalf, are not normally permitted to record electronically any meeting that are held under the grievance procedure. This is to encourage openness and full participation. Any breach of this provision may lead to disciplinary action.

Data protection

The school processes personal data collected during informal complaints and the formal grievance procedure in accordance with its data protection policy. In particular, data collected as part of informal complaints and the grievance procedure is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of responding to the complaints or conducting the grievance procedure. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the school's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Advice and support

The school recognise that these issues can be stressful and upsetting for all concerned. The school will seek to ensure that all employees involved in the process are treated calmly and with respect and receive the appropriate support. Employees may seek support from their headteacher and their trade union representation who can give informed advice in confidence.

Equality

The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment. Employees (and any job applicants) will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or caring responsibility. This means that the application of the policy and procedure may need to be adjusted to cater for the specific needs of an individual including the provision of information in alternative formats where necessary.

Monitoring and review

The school will monitor this policy and procedure to ensure that it is operating fairly, consistently and effectively. The policy and procedure will also be reviewed in the light of operating experience and/or changes in legislation.

Appendix 1 – form to raise a formal grievance.

This form should only be used where employees wish to make a formal complaint under the school's Grievance Policy and Procedure. Please send the completed form to the headteacher/line manager/Chair of Governors in an envelope marked "confidential" or sent as an email attachment with "confidential" in the subject line.

Formal grievance	
Employee's name:	
School Name:	
Name of headteacher/manager:	
Trade Union (if a member):	
Date:	

Summary of complaint:

- Please set out the details of the complaint providing as much detail as possible, particularly dates, times, locations and the identities of those involved (you should stick to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive). You may attach additional sheets or any supporting documentary evidence, if necessary.

Outcome you are seeking:

Please set out how you would like to see your complaint dealt with, and why and how you believe that this will resolve the issue.

Declaration:

I confirm that the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that making any false, malicious or untrue allegations may result in disciplinary action being taken against me.

Form completed by:	
Signature*:	

*Note: Electronic signatures are acceptable providing that the form is being sent directly from the employee raising the formal complaint.

Appendix 2 – order of proceedings for a grievance hearing

During any grievance hearing conducted under the school/academy's Grievance Policy and Procedure, the following will take place:

- The Hearing Manager will introduce the hearing and explain its purpose and how it will be conducted. The purpose of the hearing will be to allow the employee to restate and fully explain the details of the grievance and how they think it should be resolved.
- Parties of the hearing will introduce themselves and confirm their respective roles in the hearing. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied, if they wish, by a fellow school worker, a trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union.
- The Hearing Manager will state that the hearing is being conducted as part of the school's Grievance Policy and Procedure and confirm that a written record of the hearing will be made.
- The Hearing Manager will state whether any witnesses have been asked to give evidence at the hearing and, if so, who they are.
- The complainant(s) will be allowed a full and fair opportunity to restate their grievance and how they would like it to be resolved, submitting any supporting evidence. They may do this personally or the complainants' representative (if they have elected to be represented) may do this on their behalf.
- Any witnesses whom the complainant(s) has arranged to call will be called into the hearing and asked to state their evidence in front of all parties.
- The Hearing Manager will question the complainant on their evidence and raise points about any information provided by witnesses. (Although the complainant(s) may confer with their representative at any time during the hearing on request, the Hearing Manager had the right to ask the complainant(s) personally to answer any questions put to them).
- The Hearing Manager will sum up the key points of the hearing and advise the complainant(s) of when they can expect a response, subject to further investigation that may be necessary.
- The Hearing Manager will close the hearing.
- Following the hearing, the Hearing Manager may adjourn the meeting if new facts arise during the hearing that require further investigation, to allow sufficient time for the investigation to take place.

Appendix 3 – Order of Proceedings for a Grievance Appeal Hearing

During any appeal hearing conducted under the school's Grievance Policy and Procedure, the following will take place:

- Chair of the Panel will introduce the hearing and explain its purpose and how it will be conducted. The purpose of the hearing will be to review the facts and determine, on conclusion of the hearing, whether they have proper grounds to amend or overturn the original outcome of the complaint.
- Parties of the hearing will introduce themselves and confirm their respective roles in the hearing. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied, if they wish, by a fellow school/academy worker, a trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union.
- Chair of the Panel will state that the hearing is being conducted as part of the school/academy's Grievance Policy and Procedure and confirm that a written record of the hearing will be made.
- Chair of the Panel will state whether any witnesses have been asked to give evidence at the hearing, and if so, who they are.
- The complainant(s) will be allowed a full and fair opportunity to state their case and outline why they believe that the original decision should be overturned. They may do this

personally or the complainant's representative (if they have elected to be represented) may do this on their behalf.

- Any witnesses whom the complainant(s) has arranged to call will be called into the hearing and asked to state their evidence in front of all parties.
- The Panel will question the complainant on their evidence and raise points about any information provided by witnesses. (Although the complainant(s) may confer with their representative at any time during the hearing on request, the Chair of the Panel has the right to ask the complainant(s) personally to answer any questions put to them).
- The Panel will ask the Hearing Manager to respond to anything raised by the complainant(s) or witnesses.
- Chair of the Panel will sum up the key points of the hearing.
- Chair of the Panel will call for an adjournment to consider the matter and may consult with colleagues on any points of procedure and law.
- The hearing will reconvene, and the Chair of the Panel will inform the complainant(s) of the decision on whether to uphold, amend or overturn the original decision.
- Chair of the Panel will inform the complainant(s) that this decision is final and that there is no further right of appeal.
- Chair of Panel will close the hearing.
- Following the hearing, Chair of the Panel will confirm the decision in writing.
- At any point during the hearing the Chair of the Panel may adjourn the proceedings if it appears necessary or desirable to do so (including for the purpose of gathering further information).