ACT MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

(Trust-wide policy aligned to People & Employment Framework and Scheme of Delegation)

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Field	Detail
Name of document	Grievance Procedure
Status	Trust-wide statutory employment policy
Approved by	Trust Board
Policy owner	CEO (Interim HR Lead)
Review cycle	Annual
Next review date	July 2027
Applies to	All employees of ACT Multi Academy Trust
Version	v1.0
Date approved	15/07/2026
Date issued	October 2026
Scheme of Delegation reference	Operates in accordance with ACT MAT Scheme of Delegation
Related policies	Disciplinary, Capability, Pay Policy, Code of Conduct, People & Employment Framework
Publication	Available to all staff via Trust systems

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
0.9	**[Insert]**	**Legacy**	Previous grievance arrangements based on model guidance with variation in application across academies and limited procedural clarity.
1.0	**May 2026**	**CEO**	Full redevelopment of the Grievance Procedure into a Trust-wide, governance-led policy with defined investigation, hearing and decision-making processes, embedding consistency, legal compliance and alignment with the ACT HR framework.

1. PURPOSE

This Grievance Procedure sets out how employees of ACT Multi Academy Trust may raise concerns relating to their employment and seek resolution in a fair, consistent and timely manner.
The procedure ensures that:

- employees have a clear and accessible route to raise concerns
- grievances are addressed at the earliest appropriate level
- matters are considered objectively and based on evidence
- outcomes are reasonable, proportionate and clearly communicated

The Trust is committed to resolving grievances:

- as close to the source as possible
- in a manner that is fair to all parties
- in line with statutory requirements and Trust policy

All grievance matters are managed on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust as the legal employer.

1.2 Scope of Grievances

Grievances may arise from a range of issues, including (but not limited to):

- working conditions
- the application or non-application of policies and procedures
- working environment
- relationships with managers or colleagues
- duties and responsibilities
- workload

Grievances may also relate to:

- discrimination
- harassment
- bullying
- victimisation

1.3 Relationship to Other Procedures

Where a grievance relates to matters covered by another procedure, including:

- Pay Policy
- Capability Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Whistleblowing Procedure

the Trust will determine the most appropriate process to follow, or may run processes concurrently where appropriate.
This procedure must not be used to challenge:

- dismissal decisions
- disciplinary sanctions

These must be addressed through the relevant appeals process.

1.4 Governance and Employer Status ACT Multi Academy Trust is the employer of all staff.
All grievance matters:
• are managed on behalf of the Trust
• must comply with the Scheme of Delegation
• are subject to Trust-level oversight and assurance
No individual academy operates as an independent employer in relation to grievance matters.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees of ACT Multi Academy Trust.
A grievance may relate to (but is not limited to):

- working conditions
- relationships with colleagues or managers
- application of policies
- workload or role expectations
- pay or grading concerns

This policy applies to:

- teaching staff (in line with STPCD and Burgundy Book)
- support staff (in line with Green Book terms and conditions)

The Burgundy Book and Green Book establish national terms and conditions frameworks, but grievance processes are determined locally by employer policy

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3. CORE PRINCIPLES

The Trust will ensure:

- compliance with ACAS Code of Practice
- fair and timely handling of all grievances
- the right to be accompanied at formal stages
- confidentiality where appropriate
- no employee suffers detriment for raising a grievance

Grievances will be:

- managed proportionately
- resolved at the earliest opportunity where possible
- considered objectively and without bias

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4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All roles operate within the **Scheme of Delegation**.

Role	Responsibility
Trust Board	Employer accountability
CEO	Strategic oversight and reporting
Headteacher	Manages grievance processes at school level
Investigating Officer	Conducts investigation where required
Grievance Hearing Officer/Panel	Makes formal decisions
Appeal Panel	Independent appeal
HR Advice	Ensures legal compliance and consistency

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5. INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns informally in the first instance, where appropriate.
This may include:

- discussion with line manager
- mediation or facilitated discussion
- informal resolution between parties

Where issues cannot be resolved informally, the employee may raise a formal grievance.
Mediation arrangements will be facilitated by the Trust and must be agreed by all parties. Mediation outcomes are informal and do not replace the formal grievance process.

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6. FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

6.1 Raising a Formal Grievance

Where a matter cannot be resolved informally, the employee must submit a formal grievance in writing.
The written grievance must:

- clearly set out:

    - the nature of the concern
    - relevant facts and chronology
    - individuals involved
    - any supporting evidence
    - the outcome sought

The grievance should normally be submitted:

- within **3 months of the issue arising**, or
- within 3 months of the most recent occurrence where the matter is ongoing

Where this timeframe is exceeded, the Trust will:

- determine whether it is reasonable to proceed, taking into account:
    - the reasons for delay
    - the seriousness of the matter
    - the availability of reliable evidence

6.2 Acknowledgement and Initial Assessment

Upon receipt of a formal grievance, the Trust will:

- acknowledge the grievance in writing
- determine the appropriate approach to managing the case

This will include:

- whether the matter can be resolved without formal hearing
- whether a formal investigation is required
- who will act as:
    - Investigating Officer
    - Decision Maker (Hearing Officer or Panel)

The Trust must ensure:

- separation between the Investigating Officer and the decision-maker wherever reasonably practicable

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6.3 Investigation

Where an investigation is required, it will be conducted by an appropriately appointed Investigating Officer.
The Investigating Officer will:

- define the scope of the investigation
- gather relevant evidence
- interview the employee raising the grievance
- interview witnesses and relevant parties
- review documentation and records

The employee will:

- be given the opportunity to:
    - present their case
    - provide evidence
    - identify witnesses

The investigation will:

- be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the grievance
- be conducted in a timely and impartial manner

6.4 Investigation Report

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigating Officer will:

- produce a **written investigation report**

The report will:

- summarise the issues raised
- outline the evidence gathered
- present findings of fact
- not determine the outcome (this is the role of the decision-maker)

The report will:

- be shared with the decision-maker
- be provided to the employee in advance of any formal hearing

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6.5 Grievance Hearing

Where required, a formal grievance hearing will be convened.
The hearing will be conducted by:

- an appropriately authorised manager or panel acting on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust

The employee will be:

- given at least **5 working days' written notice**
- provided with:
    - the investigation report
    - all relevant documentation
- informed of their right to be accompanied

6.6 Conduct of the Hearing

The hearing will follow a structured process.
The Chair will:

- open the meeting and explain the purpose
- confirm the process to be followed
- introduce all attendees

The employee (or their representative) will:

- present the grievance
- explain their concerns
- refer to supporting evidence
- call witnesses (where appropriate)

The Investigating Officer (if applicable) will:

- present the findings of the investigation
- clarify evidence gathered

The Chair and panel will:

- ask questions to clarify facts
- test evidence where necessary

Both parties will:

- have the opportunity to respond to points raised

6.7 Adjournment and Decision-Making

Following the hearing, the panel will:

- adjourn to consider the outcome

Decisions will:

- be made on the **balance of probabilities**
- be based on:
    - evidence presented
    - findings of the investigation
    - representations made during the hearing

All decisions must be:

- reasonable
- proportionate
- consistent with comparable cases

6.8 Possible Outcomes

The outcome of a grievance will be one of the following:

(a) Grievance Upheld

- the complaint is fully substantiated

- appropriate action will be taken

(b) Grievance Partially Upheld

- elements of the grievance are substantiated
- proportionate action will be taken

(c) Grievance Not Upheld

- insufficient evidence to support the grievance

6.9 Actions Following Outcome

Where a grievance is upheld or partially upheld, actions may include:

- informal or formal management action
- review of working arrangements
- mediation between parties
- review or amendment of policies or procedures
- referral to another procedure (e.g. disciplinary)

The decision-maker will:

- identify what action is to be taken
- identify who is responsible for implementation
- confirm timescales for action

6.10 Outcome Letter

The outcome of the grievance will be confirmed in writing.
The outcome letter will include:

- the decision reached
- the findings of the investigation
- the evidence considered
- the rationale for the decision
- whether the grievance is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld
- any actions to be taken and associated timescales
- the employee's right of appeal

The letter will:

- be retained on the employee's personnel file

6.11 Grievances Against Senior Leaders

Where the grievance relates to:

(a) Headteacher

- the grievance will be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer
- the CEO will:
    - determine how the case is managed
    - appoint an appropriate Investigating Officer or panel

(b) Chief Executive Officer

- the grievance will be submitted to the Chair of the Trust Board
- the Trust Board will:
    - assume responsibility as employer
    - appoint an independent Investigating Officer and/or panel

In all such cases:

- independence and objectivity must be maintained
- the process must comply with the Scheme of Delegation

6.12 Record Keeping

The Trust will ensure that:

- all stages of the grievance process are documented

This includes:

- grievance submission
- investigation records
- investigation report
- hearing notes
- outcome decision and rationale

All records must:

- be clear and accurate
- support audit and review
- be retained on the personnel file

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7. APPEALS

Employees have the right to appeal a grievance outcome. Appeals must:

- be submitted in writing within 10 working days
- clearly state the grounds for appeal

Appeals will:

- be heard by an independent panel acting on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust
- be conducted in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation
- not include any individual previously involved

The appeal panel must:

- consider the original decision and evidence
- consider the grounds of appeal
- make a decision based on the balance of probabilities

The appeal outcome:

- will be confirmed in writing
- will include a clear rationale
- is final and binding and made on behalf of the Trust as employer

The decision is final and binding and made on behalf of ACT Multi Academy Trust as employer.

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8. RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED

At formal stages, employees have the right to be accompanied by:

- a trade union representative
- a workplace colleague

The companion may:

- present the case
- confer with the employee

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9. OVERLAP WITH OTHER PROCEDURES

Where a grievance:

- relates to disciplinary matters → Disciplinary Procedure may apply
- relates to performance → Capability Procedure may apply

The Trust reserves the right to:

- pause a grievance
- progress another procedure first
- or run processes concurrently where appropriate

10. VEXATIOUS OR MALICIOUS GRIEVANCES

Where a grievance is found to be:

- vexatious
- frivolous
- or malicious

this may be addressed under the Disciplinary Procedure.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

All parties must maintain appropriate confidentiality.
Information will only be shared where necessary to:

- investigate
- resolve
- or manage the grievance

12. RECORD KEEPING

The Trust will:

- keep accurate records
- document decisions and rationale
- comply with data protection legislation

13. CONTINUATION OF PROCESS DURING SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Trust recognises that employees may be absent due to sickness during a grievance process. In such circumstances, the Trust will take a balanced, reasonable and proportionate approach, ensuring both:

- appropriate support for the employee; and
- the timely and effective progression of the grievance process

Absence due to sickness will not automatically delay or suspend the grievance procedure.

13.1 Approach During Sickness Absence

Where an employee is absent during a grievance process, the Trust will:

- consider the nature and likely duration of the illness
- assess the employee's ability to participate in the process
- take appropriate advice, including Occupational Health where necessary
- make reasonable adjustments to enable participation

Adjustments may include:

- rescheduling meetings within a reasonable timeframe
- conducting meetings remotely or via written submissions
- permitting representation on behalf of the employee

13.2 Continuation of Process

Where absence is:

- prolonged;
- intermittent; or
- impacting the Trust's ability to conclude the process in a timely manner

the Trust reserves the right to progress the grievance procedure in the employee's absence, including:

- proceeding with investigation and/or hearings
- considering the available evidence
- reaching decisions based on the information available

This will apply where it is reasonable and proportionate to do so, taking into account:

- medical advice (where available)

- the steps taken to enable participation
- the nature and seriousness of the grievance
- the impact on individuals, teams, and the organisation

13.3 Decision-Making in Absence

Any decision to proceed in the employee's absence will:

- be made on a case-by-case basis
- be supported by appropriate professional advice
- be clearly documented, including the rationale

The Trust will ensure that the employee:

- is kept informed throughout
- has access to relevant documentation
- is given the opportunity to make representations (where reasonably practicable)

13.4 Non-Delay Principle

The Trust will ensure that sickness absence is not used to unreasonably delay, defer or frustrate the application of this procedure.

At all times, the Trust will act in a manner that is:

- fair
- reasonable
- consistent
- compliant with its duty of care and legal obligations

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14. MONITORING, REVIEW AND ASSURANCE

The CEO (Interim HR Lead) will:

- monitor grievance trends
- ensure consistency across the Trust
- identify organisational risks
- report to Trustees via the HR Dashboard

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15. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be:

- reviewed annually
- approved by the Trust Board
- updated in line with legislation

APPENDIX A – GRIEVANCE FORM

Appendix A – Employee Grievance Form

A1. Purpose of the Form

This form is to be used by employees to raise a formal grievance under the Trust's Grievance Procedure.
The purpose of this form is to:

- clearly set out the nature of the grievance
- ensure all relevant information is captured
- support a fair and timely resolution

SECTION 1: EMPLOYEE DETAILS

Name:
Job Title:
School / Department:
Line Manager:
Date of Submission:

SECTION 2: NATURE OF THE GRIEVANCE

Please clearly describe your grievance.
You should include:

- what has happened
- who is involved
- relevant dates and times
- where the issue has occurred

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

SECTION 3: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Please provide any relevant background information, including:

- previous discussions or attempts to resolve the issue
- any relevant policies or procedures
- any supporting context

SECTION 4: INFORMAL ACTION TAKEN

Have you attempted to resolve this matter informally?
☐ Yes
☐ No
If yes, please provide details:

- who you spoke to
- when discussions took place
- outcome of discussions

SECTION 5: IMPACT OF THE GRIEVANCE

Please describe how this issue has affected you, for example:

- your work
- your working relationships

- your wellbeing

SECTION 6: OUTCOME SOUGHT

Please clearly state the outcome or resolution you are seeking:

SECTION 7: SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Please list any documents or evidence you are providing:
☐ Emails
☐ Letters
☐ Notes of meetings
☐ Other (please specify)

SECTION 8: WITNESSES (IF APPLICABLE)

Please provide details of any witnesses:
Name:
Role:

SECTION 9: DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- the information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge
- this grievance is submitted in good faith

Signed:
Date:

Submission Guidance

This form should be submitted to:

- your Line Manager; or
- where the grievance relates to your Line Manager, to the next appropriate manager (Headteacher or CEO)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following ACT Multi Academy Trust policies:

• Capability Procedure

• Disciplinary Procedure

• Redundancy and Restructuring Procedure

• Maternity Leave and Pay Policy

• Family Leave Policy (Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave)

• Attendance and Sickness Absence Policy

• Flexible Working Policy

• Code of Conduct

• People and Employment Framework

• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (where applicable)