



Staff Appeal Policy and Procedure

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Reach South Academy Trust recognises that it has a statutory obligation to adopt formal policies and establish workplace procedures to cover a range of different staffing matters across the Trust to ensure proper and adequate procedures are observed before any decision is taken to safeguard a fair decision process.
- 1.2 Staff have the right to appeal against decisions made, in accordance with the Trust's policies and procedures which explicitly include an appeal stage. The purpose of the appeal process is to consider the grounds of appeal submitted by the member of staff and is not a re-hearing of the case previously presented under the relevant staff policy or procedure.
- 1.3 Where a member of staff has appealed against a decision to dismiss, the decision shall not take effect until the appeal has been determined, except where the dismissal is with immediate effect i.e. without notice.
- 1.4 After appropriate consideration, new evidence, material or witnesses may be deemed inadmissible by the independent Chair at an appeal hearing, unless there are good reasons why they were unavailable at the time of the original hearing, or where new evidence emerges. Where the case involves safeguarding matters, the manager/chair of the panel hearing the appeal will determine the most appropriate way to hear witness evidence. The manager/chair will be independent and not previously involved in the process, at any stage.
- 1.5 The outcome of an appeal against a decision may be to confirm, reduce, or dismiss the earlier decision. Where an appeal against dismissal is successful, and the dismissal was with immediate effect, the individual will be immediately reinstated and paid for any period of time between the date of the dismissal and the appeal outcome.
- 1.6 The decision at appeal will be final.

2. Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement

- 2.1 At Reach South Academy Trust, we are committed to creating a vibrant and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and fosters a sense of belonging for all. This commitment extends to every aspect of our work, from the education we deliver to the staff we employ. We believe in fairness, equity, and promoting social mobility for all.
- 2.2. We actively promote inclusivity through our People policies and practices. We value and respect every individual, regardless of background, and strive to build a diverse staff and student body that reflects the richness of the communities we serve.
- 2.3 We dismantle barriers to opportunity by ensuring equal access to resources and development opportunities for all staff members. Our People policies are designed to be fair and unbiased, promoting a level playing field for career progression regardless of social or economic background.
- 2.4 Serving Our Local Communities: We actively engage with local communities to understand their needs and perspectives. Our recruitment practices prioritise attracting talent from diverse backgrounds within our local area, further strengthening the connection between the Trust and the communities it serves.

- 2.5 Our People policies are developed and implemented in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. This ensures an environment characterised by dignity and respect, free from harassment, bullying, and victimisation.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for all staff who are appealing against a formal sanction applied by the Trust.
- 3.2 This policy and procedure will be applied consistently and fairly to all employees, based on the circumstances of their case. Employees will be treated less favourably on the grounds of their gender, disability, age, race, creed, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origin, trade union membership or activity, sexual orientation, medical condition or marital status.
- 3.3 The procedure is written in line with the ACAS Code of Practice.
- 3.4 All proceedings under this procedure will be held in private and shall be confidential.

4. Scope of the procedure

- 4.1 This policy and procedure applies to all Reach South Academy Trust staff who wish to exercise their right to appeal against a formal sanction and termination of employment under the following Trust procedures.

These include:

- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Managing Performance Policy
- Managing Attendance (Ill Health) Policy
- Probation Policy
- Management of Change Policy

- 4.2 The Appeals Policy does not constitute part of the contract of employment. It may be amended at any time. Amendments will be subject to consultation with the recognised trade unions except those necessitated by a change in the law.
- 4.3 This policy does not form part of the employment contract, and the Trust may update it at any time in consultation with Trade Unions.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 Reach South Academy Trust People Team will offer advice at all stages of the procedure, and it is strongly recommended that Headteachers and Managers seek advice from the People Team.

6. Representation

- 6.1 At all stages of the formal procedure, employees have a statutory right to be represented by a recognised trade union representative or by a work colleague. A

trade union representative who is not an employed official must have been certified by their union as being competent to accompany the employee. Right to representation at informal stages of the process will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the circumstances

- 6.2 The employee is responsible for arranging their representation or person accompanying them, including notifying the person of the hearing date in good time and sending copies of all relevant documentation. Where the employee's trade union representative or work colleague is not available at the time proposed for the meeting/hearing, the employee may propose an alternative date and time that falls within five working days after the original date proposed. Consideration may be given to extending this period on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.3 It is good practice for management to try to agree a mutually convenient date for the meeting with the employee and their representative or work colleague in order to ensure that meetings do not have to be delayed or rescheduled.
- 6.4 The trade union representative or work colleague may address a meeting/hearing to put the case for the employee and/or sum up the case, may respond on behalf of the employee to any views expressed at the meeting/hearing and may confer with the employee. However, the said representative or work colleague may not, answer questions on the employee's behalf.
- 6.5 The Trust will consider whether any additional support for the employee is required, for example to make reasonable adjustments for a disability or to be sensitive to the member of staff's circumstances. At an appeal hearing, reasonable adjustments may include providing alternative formats for information (e.g., large print, audio), allowing extra time for preparation, or holding the meeting in a quiet, accessible location. Employees should discuss any necessary adjustments with the chair in advance of the meeting, to ensure their needs are met and that the hearing can proceed fairly and effectively.

7. Procedure - Making an appeal

- 7.1 An appeal against a formal warning or decision to dismiss must be received in writing by the Director of People no later than five working days after the receipt of the written outcome letter. The member of staff should set out clearly the grounds for appeal in full, stating whether or not they will be represented and if so, by whom.
- 7.2 The member of staff must provide details under the grounds for their appeal as follows:
 - **New evidence comes to light**
The grounds of the appeal must detail the nature of new evidence.
 - **They believe the procedure was not followed correctly**
Summary of why the process was not followed correctly.
 - **The outcome applied was unfair or the sanction was overly harsh or other sanctions, that would have addressed the issues, were not appropriately considered**
Details reasons why outcome was unfair, or the sanction was too severe
 - **They believe the manager was incorrect in reaching their findings**

Details concerning the reason why there is a belief the finding was incorrect.

- 7.3 Failure to provide details of the grounds for appeal as described above may lead the Trust to decline to hear the appeal.
- 7.4 Unless agreed otherwise, the Trust does not consider itself technically obliged to convene an appeal if the request is received later than the timeframes requested in the policy.

8. Appeal process

- 8.1 In the event of an appeal against a formal warning, the appeal hearing will be conducted by an appropriate manager (who has not been previously involved in the case) at the same level or where possible senior to the manager who made the original decision. A member of the People Team will be present to provide professional advice.
- 8.2 In the event of an appeal against dismissal, the Director of People will arrange for the appeal to be heard by an appeal panel consisting of two appropriate managers (who have not had previous involvement in the case). The Chair of the appeal panel will be at the same level or where possible senior to the Chair of the panel who made the original decision. A member of the People Team will be present to provide professional advice.
- 8.3 The member of staff will be notified of the appeal hearing details in writing and will be given at least 10 working days' notice of the time, date and location of the hearing. The employee has the right to be accompanied (see section 4 – Representation). The manager presenting the Trust's case may be accompanied and assisted by a representative from the People Team.
- 8.3 Note taker – a note taker will be present at the meeting. This person should not be connected with the case and should not be controversial to any party. The notes of the meeting will be provided on request to any party to the meeting.
- 8.4 The appeal will address the issues raised in the grounds for appeal as submitted to the Director of People. Where the grounds for appeal are based on new evidence, material or witnesses, the employee must provide a clear explanation of the relevance of the information, stating why it was not possible to present it at the initial hearing. It is for the manager hearing the appeal to determine if such information (and/or witnesses) is admissible.
- 8.4 Both parties will be required to submit any supporting evidence and should submit any additional documentary evidence to the Director of People at the earliest opportunity, and no later than five working days before the appeal hearing.
- 8.5 The member of staff's statement should set out clearly the grounds on which they are contesting the outcome. It should be sufficiently detailed to enable the manager and panel to understand on what basis the appeal was lodged.
- 8.6 The management statement should set out the reasons for the action taken/conclusion reached. It should be sufficiently detailed to enable the member of staff to understand on what basis the decision was reached, and to prepare their own case.
- 8.7 All parties involved in the appeal will receive all relevant information at least five working days in advance of the hearing.

- 8.8 Both parties should provide details of any witnesses they intend to call. It will be the responsibility of member of staff and management to call and brief their own witnesses.
- 8.9 Witnesses will not normally be required to be in attendance for the whole of the appeal meeting. Each witness will be called to give evidence and will then leave the room. Wherever possible, the witness will be told at this point whether they are free to leave or are likely to be recalled.
- 8.10 The order of proceedings at an appeal hearing is provided at Appendix 1.
- 8.11 Once the evidence has been considered, the following options are available:
- To not uphold the appeal and endorse the original action taken.
 - To uphold the appeal.
 - To uphold the appeal but provide other recommendation(s) and/or in disciplinary cases substitute a lesser sanction.
- 8.12 The decision will be confirmed in writing within five working days of the hearing date.
- 8.13 The decision at appeal will be final.

9. Failure to attend the appeal hearing

- 9.1 The member of staff must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. In the event that the member of staff fails to attend the appeal hearing without prior notification and/or without substantial reason, then the manager/panel hearing the appeal may deem it appropriate to consider the case and make a decision in the absence of the staff member.

10. Confidentiality

- 10.1 All related records (including those of the investigation and appeal hearing) will remain strictly confidential.

POLICY HISTORY

Policy Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation Date	Review Date
December 2021	Consultation with all recognised Trade Unions	All recognised Trade Unions	N/A	N/A
April 2022	Implementation of new policy	HR	April 2022	April 2025
February 2025	References of HR amended to People Team Addition of DIB Statement and elaboration on reasonable adjustments.	People Team	April 2025	April 2028

Appendix 1 – Framework for an Appeal Meeting

The following procedure will normally be followed. The Trust may make changes to this process where it deems that there are sensitive issues being considered:

The Chair of the panel will:

- Introduce those present.
- Explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Advise all present of the order of the procedure, which will be followed at the meeting, and to ensure that it is understood by the employee and where appropriate their representative:

The following procedure should be adopted:

- The member of staff or their representative will present their case.
- The member of staff or their representative will call any witnesses during the presentation of their case.
- The manager may ask questions of the member of staff and any witnesses, as may the panel.
- The member of staff or their representative will have a final opportunity to question the witnesses.
- The manager will present their case and call any witnesses.
- The member of staff or their representative may ask questions of the manager and any witnesses, as may the panel.
- The manager will have a final opportunity to question the witnesses.
- The member of staff or their representative will sum up their case. The summing up shall not introduce any new matter.
- The manager will sum up their case. The summing up shall not introduce any new matter.
- Following summing up both parties, the employee and the presenting manager, will leave the room.

It should be noted that the panel members may:

- Ask for clarification of any statements made during the course of the proceedings.
- Decide to adjourn at any stage, or at the request of either party. The duration of the adjournment will be made clear and a decision reached on the time the meeting is to be reconvened.
- All parties have the right to request an adjournment as appropriate.

When all the evidence has been presented the meeting should be adjourned for the panel, with People Team support in attendance, to reach a decision on the case. Both parties may be recalled if points of uncertainty need to be clarified.

Once a decision has been reached the employee, their representative and the manager should be recalled and informed of the manager's/Chairperson's decision.

The decision of the appeal panel is final.