

Grievance procedure

1. Introduction

The following procedure should be followed in order to settle all grievances concerning any employee(s) of St Michaels Playgroup (St Albans).

2. Principles

- The key objective of the procedure is to allow grievances to be settled quickly, fairly and at the lowest possible level within St Michaels Playgroup (St Albans), whilst allowing employees the opportunity to appeal to a higher level if necessary.
- The procedure covers all employed staff in St Michaels Playgroup (St Albans) who have a grievance.
- It covers all matters which may become a source of grievance, excluding:
 - those concerned with disciplinary action, unless the disciplinary action amounts to discrimination, or the action was not taken on the grounds of the employee's conduct or capability
 - decisions on strategic business issues, which are taken by the trustees, but not excluding the operational impact of those decisions
- Employees are encouraged to raise concerns verbally with their manager (or employer) prior to raising a formal grievance.
- Employees are entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or by a work colleague at a grievance meeting and appeal.

3. Procedure

St Michaels Playgroup's policy is to encourage free interchange and communication between managers and the staff they manage. This ensures that questions and problems can be aired and resolved quickly and that grievances are settled informally.

4. Informal procedure

- If an employee has a complaint about their individual circumstances at work, then they are entitled to raise a grievance. Employees are expected to discuss ordinary day-to-day issues informally with their manager through supervision meetings or if necessary request a separate meeting. Where this is not possible employees should raise their concerns verbally with the next level of management, prior to raising a formal grievance.
- If after seeking to resolve concerns informally, employees are not satisfied, then they should write to the setting explaining their grievance.

5. Formal procedure

- Employees must state in writing the nature of the alleged grievance and send the written complaint to their manager.
- Where the grievance is against their manager, the matter should be raised with a more senior manager, normally the manager's manager (for example, the appropriate trustee, owner or director).
- Normally within five working days of receiving a grievance, the manager will write to the employee, inviting them to attend a meeting where the alleged grievance can be discussed. The meeting should be scheduled to take place as soon as reasonably possible, and normally at least 48 hours' notice of this meeting should be provided to the employee.
- Employees are required to take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. However, should, for a reasonably unforeseen reason, either the employee, employee's companion, or the manager be

unable to attend the meeting, it must be rearranged.

- Should an employee's companion be unable to attend, then the employee should make contact within five days of the date of the letter to arrange an alternative date that falls within 10 days of the original date provided. These time limits may be extended by mutual agreement.
- At the meeting the employee must inform the manager hearing the grievance what the basis for the complaint is.
- After the final meeting, the manager hearing the grievance must write to the employee informing them about any decision and offering the right of appeal. This letter should be sent within 10 working days of the grievance meeting and should include the details of how to appeal.
- Should the employee consider that the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, then they must set out their grounds of appeal in writing within seven working days of receipt of the decision letter, confirming that they wish to appeal against the decision or failure to make a decision.
- Within five working days of receiving an appeal letter, the employee should be invited in writing to attend an appeal hearing where the alleged grievance can be discussed. The appeal meeting should be scheduled to take place as soon as reasonably possible.
- Employees are required to take all reasonable steps to attend the appeal hearing. However, should, for a reasonably unforeseen reason, either the employee, the manager or the employee's companion be unable to attend the meeting, it must be rearranged.
- Should an employee's companion be unable to attend then the employee should make contact within five days of the date of the letter to arrange an alternative date that falls within 10 days of the original date provided. These time limits may be extended by mutual agreement.
- After the appeal meeting, the appeal hearing manager must write to the employee informing them of the employer's final decision. This letter should be sent within 10 working days of the appeal hearing.
- This is the final stage of the procedure.