



Special Partnership Trust



Date Last Reviewed: September 2023

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Staff Grievance Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Grievance Policy and Procedure is reviewed bi-annually by The Trustees of The Special Partnership Trust and the Trustees have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this procedure but has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Trust Senior Leadership Team.
- 1.2 It is recognised that management structures/administrative arrangements will vary according to the size of the academy within the Trust and therefore, in smaller academies, the procedure may be limited to two formal stages only (i.e. with the procedure commencing at Stage Two).
- 1.3 This procedure does not cover all circumstances regarding individual grievances and the CEO and Headteacher will seek professional advice where there is doubt on matters of procedural interpretation.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To promote the early, effective and satisfactory resolution of individual employment related grievances, by providing a structured framework through which individual members of staff can seek redress.
- 2.2 Broadly, a grievance may be raised about any matter arising from employment, including grievances amongst members of staff, with the Headteacher or the Governing Body and /or Trustees.
- 2.3 This policy also applies to instances of alleged bullying or harassment in the workplace. The Trustees of The Special Partnership Trust has expectations about the standards of language and behaviour that all members of staff have the right to expect and are expected to show to others in their communication and behaviour at work. It aims to assist in the development and maintenance of a working environment in which bullying and harassment are known to be unacceptable and to ensure that, if it occurs, there are adequate arrangements in place for raising and dealing with it and for preventing recurrence. In circumstances where an employee holds a concern of this nature, this Procedure provides the framework to address the concern.
- 2.4 This procedure is not the appropriate resource for the following employment matters:
 - Any outcome of a disciplinary process (in such circumstances the Appeals' Procedure established within the Disciplinary Procedure applies).
 - Any issue relating to the pay progression of a Teacher.
 - Whistleblowing (in such circumstances, the Trusts' Whistleblowing Procedure applies).
 - Matters relating to the rules of the Local Government Pension Scheme or Teachers' Pension Scheme (such matters will be referred to the Scheme Administrators and ultimately Pensions' Ombudsman).

3. Scope

- 3.1 The procedure applies to employees of the Special Partnership Trust. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns.
- 3.2 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and the Trust may amend it at any time.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 The Trustees of The Special Partnership Trust value the contribution made by all members of staff to the delivery of a high quality education service for the benefits of the school and the community of Cornwall. We

recognise that the quality of this contribution will be influenced and enhanced if all members of staff can enjoy a working environment that supports and encourages them in working to their full potential.

- 4.2 The Trustees are committed to promoting and sustaining a working environment in which all members of staff feel valued and respected and in which they co-operate and community effectively with each other in seeking to achieve the highest standards of work performance. It is recognised that situations may arise where a member of staff may wish to seek redress for grievances arising from their employment. Accordingly, the Trustees are committed to ensuring that staff are able to raise grievances in the first place, and where possible, have them resolved without unreasonable delay and to the satisfaction of all concerned.
- 4.3 Most issues should be discussed and can be dealt with satisfactorily within the course of normal working relationships where staff should feel that their problems and opinions could be discussed frankly and freely with each other and /or with their line manager.
- 4.4 However, where an employment-related individual grievance has not been resolved informally or where it is considered inappropriate to resolve the issue on an informal basis, the staff member will:
- Be given a fair hearing on any grievance;
 - Have the right to take issue to senior management where appropriate;
 - Or if still not satisfied, have the right to take the issue further to a Committee of Governors/Trustees by way of an appeal.
- 4.5 Where the procedure is invoked, the Trustees/Governing Body/Headteacher and CEO are committed to ensuring that the grievance is addressed as quickly as is reasonably practicable.
- 4.6 The Trustees/Governing Body/Headteacher/CEO is committed to fair and respectful treatment of all staff. Where an employee raises a concern in respect of their employment, they will not suffer from any detriment or less favourable treatment as a consequence of raising a concern or making a complaint. The Trustees/Governing Body/Headteacher/CEO is committed to this principle in its application of the Grievance Procedure. The Trust's Whistleblowing Policy also enforces this principle.

5. Policy Statement regarding dignity at work

- 5.1 Any language or behaviour which has the effect of undermining, humiliating or threatening another person, including harassment and bullying, is unacceptable and will be neither permitted nor condoned. All members of staff will actively support this commitment and will use language and behaviour that is consistent with our expectations. We also recognise, however, that we need to have clear arrangements in place for raising and addressing any instance of the use of language and behaviour that is incompatible with these expectations.
- 5.2 The Trustees will demonstrate its commitment to a working environment and working relationships that are based on respect for and recognition of the individual contribution made by all members of staff by:
- Clearly communicating the standards that all members of staff have the right to expect and are expected to demonstrate to others in all workplace communication;
 - Equipping the Headteacher and Managers with the knowledge and skills required to influence a positive working environment and working relationships;
 - Alerting all members of staff to the type of language and behaviour that is not acceptable and where this occurs how this will be dealt with;
 - Identifying a range of sources of information and assistance for members of staff to help them decide what to do if they experience unacceptable language or behaviour;
 - Recognising a Grievance Complaints' Procedure that establishes appropriate informal and formal arrangements for members of staff to raise instances of unacceptable language or behaviour as set out in this Policy and Procedure document;

- Ensuring that complaints are handled sensitively and are fully investigated through appropriate procedures.

5.3 Further information and guidance on the definitions of bullying and harassment is provided in **Appendix 2.**

5.3 The Trustees are committed to protecting employees against unacceptable behaviour of this nature that may be encountered by employees through contact with representatives from the wider school community in the context of their work, i.e: parents, pupils or members of the public. The processes and strategies available to the Trustees/Governors for dealing with issues of this nature are set out in Appendix 3 of this policy.

Procedure

6. INFORMAL APPROACH AND MEDIATION

- 6.1 Attempts should always be made to resolve workplace grievances on an informal basis. Even if the problem relates to senior management or decisions made by senior management, attempts should still be made to resolve the issue on an informal basis and directly with the person(s) concerned.
- 6.2 It is important that any issue is raised as soon as possible after the event has occurred, so that resentment or worry does not build up. Also if an investigation is required, this can take place as soon as possible in order to ensure clear and accurate details are recalled before memories' fade.
- 6.3 If the staff member feels unable to speak to their manager because the complaint concerns them, then they should speak informally to the Headteacher. If this does not resolve the issue, they should follow the formal procedure below.
- 6.4 As an alternative to a facilitated meeting and prior to evoking the formal procedure, formal mediation may be arranged between the relevant parties. Formal mediation can be arranged through the appointment of an independent trained mediator. Formal mediation is only a viable option where both parties agree to engage in the mediation process and agree to commit to a Mediation Agreement at the conclusion of the process. In accordance with the principles of mediation, mediation meetings are held with the two parties concerned and the mediator only. Trade union representatives/work place colleagues or companions will not attend mediation meetings on either party's behalf. Further information on mediation is provided in Appendix 5.
- In the event that allegations made against you may amount of gross misconduct, it may be appropriate to consider suspension in line with the disciplinary policy section 5.9 during the grievance process.

7. Formal Procedure

- 7.1 Where an employment problem is considered by the member of staff to be of a sufficiently serious nature to be termed as a 'grievance', or has not been resolved as a result of an informal approach the member of staff may invoke the formal Grievance Procedure.
- 7.4 An employee wishing to invoke the formal procedure should normally raise their concerns in writing. Early notification of a grievance will help ensure early resolution.
- 7.5 At all stages of the formal procedure, the member of staff raising the grievance is entitled to take advice from and/or be accompanied or represented by a workplace colleague or trade union representative. Staff are encouraged to consult their trade union representatives or professional associations prior to invoking the grievance procedure. If the staff member or their companion cannot attend at the time

specified, they should inform the Trust immediately and it will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

- 7.6 Where the member of staff chooses not to be accompanied or represented by a trade union representative or workplace colleague it will be noted in the written summary that representation was offered and declined.
- 7.7 The Trustees/Governing Body/Headteacher/CEO is committed to addressing employee grievances in a timely manner and in all cases will endeavour to adhere to the time limits referred to throughout this Procedure. However, parties may, by mutual agreement, modify the time limits referred to in the Procedure.
- 7.8 In certain circumstances this may not be practicable, for example, delays in convening meetings due to school holiday periods and complex cases requiring lengthy investigations.

Stage One:

- 7.8.1 If a member of staff has a work-related concern and the matter cannot be resolved informally, they should raise the matter formally with their line manager by completing the **Grievance Form (see Appendix 1)**. Where the concern relates to the line manager, they should raise the matter with the Headteacher or appropriate member of the senior management team by completing the Grievance Form. It is recommended that the employee contact their trade union representative for advice and support in initiating the formal Grievance Procedure. 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 the Trust may ask the staff member to provide further information.
- 7.8.2 If the employee's concern relates to a senior manager or Headteacher, the formal Procedure will be invoked at Stage 2 (see para 7.9).
- 7.8.3 On notification of a formal grievance, the manager to which the concern was raised will, as soon as possible, arrange an investigatory meeting with the employee. This meeting will normally take place within ten working days of notification of the grievance (subject to para 7.6). The employee may attend the meeting accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative.
- 7.8.4 The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the staff member and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. The investigation may be carried out by the line manager or the Headteacher or someone else appointed by the Trust.
- 7.8.5 The staff member must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing the Trust of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending interviews, as part of our investigation.
- 7.8.6 The Trust may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting where it considers this appropriate. In other cases, the Trust may hold a grievance meeting before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases the Trust will hold a further grievance meeting after the investigation.
- 7.8.7 At the meeting the manager will listen to the details of the grievance and will endeavour to devise an appropriate resolution. The purpose of a grievance meeting is to enable the staff member to explain their grievance and how they think it should be resolved, and to assist the Trust to reach a decision based on the available evidence and the representations they have made

- 7.8.8 In the event of the requirement for further investigation to be undertaken, the manager will clarify this at the close of the meeting and give an indication of the likely timescales required for the completion of the investigation. The manager will arrange for notes of the meeting to be taken, copies of which will be provided to all parties.
- 7.8.9 Once the manager hearing the grievance has completed any further investigation required and reached a decision, the outcome of the grievance will be confirmed, including any proposed resolutions, in writing to the employee.
- 7.8.10 Normally, written confirmation of the outcome of the grievance will be provided within 5 working days of the grievance meeting, with the exception of cases where further investigation is required. In such circumstances, the manager hearing the case will determine an appropriate timescale with due consideration to the need for a swift resolution whilst allowing sufficient time to conduct the necessary additional investigations.
- 7.8.11 If the staff member is not satisfied with the outcome of the grievance hearing, they have the right to appeal as set out below.

7.9 Stage Two

- 7.9.1 Where an employee raises a grievance against a Trust senior manager or Headteacher, such matters will be automatically considered by a Panel of Trustees at Stage 2 of the Grievance Procedure.
- 7.9.2 To invoke Stage 2 of the Procedure, the employee must confirm in writing the details of the grievance by completing the **Grievance Form (Appendix 1)**. The written confirmation for invoking the Procedure at Stage 2 should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees.
- 7.9.3 On notification of a formal grievance at Stage 2 as the first stage of recourse, the Chair of Trustees will appoint a representative on behalf of the Trustees or Special Partnership Trust Management as an investigating officer to investigate the employee's concerns. It is recommended that the Chair of Trustees also contact the Trust's HR advisors to consider the appropriateness of appointing a particular representative to assist the investigating officer. The investigating officer will arrange an investigatory meeting with the employee as soon as possible. This meeting will normally take place within ten academy days of notification of the grievance (subject to para 7.6). The employee may attend the meeting accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative.

- 7.9.4 Following the investigation meeting, the investigating officer may undertake further investigations as is deemed appropriate to ascertain the full facts. Having ascertained the full information, the investigating officer will complete an investigation report. The investigating officer will convene a Panel of three Trustees for a Grievance Hearing at Stage 2 within 20 working days of completion of the investigation report.
- 7.9.5 Prior to the Grievance Hearing, the parties concerned will make their written submissions to the Grievance Panel of Trustees who should be sent all relevant documents in advance of the hearing no later than one calendar week before the grievance hearing. It is strongly recommended that the Panel of Trustees invite a Special Partnership HR advisor to act as adviser to the Panel.
- 7.9.6 At the Grievance Hearing, the employee will have the opportunity to present their concerns
- 7.9.7 The decision regarding the outcome of the grievance may be given at the hearing but will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the hearing. If it is not possible to respond within the specified time period, the employee will be given an explanation for the delay and advised when a response will be provided.

8. Appeals

- 8.1 The employee has the right of appeal against the outcome at either their Stage One or Stage Two result of the Grievance Procedure if dissatisfied. The staff member should appeal in writing to their manager or Headteacher stating the full grounds of appeal within 5 working days of the date in which the decision was sent or given to them.
- 8.2 A Panel of Trustees who have had no prior involvement in the case will hear grievance appeals.
- 8.3 The Appeals' Panel of Governors will hold the appeal, where practicable, within 20 working days of the receipt of the written request for an appeal. The employee will be informed of the date of the appeal hearing in writing and will be offered the opportunity to submit any further documents to the Panel of Trustees in advance of the hearing, but no later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- 8.4 The manager/Headteacher previously involved in addressing the grievance will also have the opportunity to make submissions to the Appeals' Panel of Trustees in response to the employee's appeal. It is strongly recommended that the Panel of Trustees invite a representative from the Trust's HR advisors to advise as appropriate.
- 8.5 All documents to be presented at the hearing in relation to the appeal will be provided to the employee no later than 3 working days prior to the hearing.
- 8.6 At the Appeal Hearing, the employee will have the opportunity to present their reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the grievance process determined at the previous stages of the Procedure, along with any evidence or documents, which he/she consider to be pertinent to his/her grounds of appeal. If appropriate, the manager of the employee or Headteacher may present a response to the appeal that may include presentation of information on the outcome of the grievance at earlier stages of the Procedure for the Panel's consideration.

- 8.7 The decision regarding the outcome of the appeal may be given at the hearing but will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the hearing. If it is not possible to respond within the specified time period the employee will be given an explanation for the delay and advised when a response will be provided.
- 8.8 The decision of the Appeal Committee of Trustees is final.

9. Headteacher's Grievance

- 9.1 Where the Headteacher has a grievance, they should first endeavour to resolve the matter informally by direct approach to the relevant person. If the grievance remains unresolved and arises from actions/decisions of the Governing Body, they should initially seek to resolve it in discussion with the Chair of the Local Governing Body in the first instance.
- 9.2 Should the grievance remain unresolved, the Headteacher should lodge the formal grievance in writing to the CEO/Chair of the Trustees.
- 9.3 The CEO/Chair of Trustees will arrange a Grievance Hearing chaired by a Committee of Trustees as per paragraph 7.9 above, within 20 working days (where practicable) of receipt of written notification of the grievance. The Panel of Trustees convened to consider grievances raised by the Headteacher shall comprise of no less than three Trustees and will not normally include any staff governor representative.
- 9.4 If the grievance is still unresolved, the Headteacher may appeal to the Appeals' Committee of the Special Partnership Trust in accordance with paragraph 7 of this Procedure. The decision of the Appeals' Panel of Trustees will be final.

Appendix 1 - Grievance Form

STATEMENT OF GRIEVANCE

To be completed by the employee to instigate a Formal Grievance. (NB: The formal procedure should only be used when attempts at informal resolution have been tried and not succeeded).

Name:..... Academy:.....
Job Title:..... Email:.....
Line Manager:..... Email:.....
Name of Representative:.....
Email/Contact No:.....
1. Provide a brief outline of the nature and reason for the grievance:
2. I have discussed this matter informally with my line manager and/or senior manager (if appropriate) but I am still dissatisfied because:

3. What specific action would you like taken in order to resolve this issue?

4. Please give names of any witnesses who may be able to offer further information.

5. I am prepared to consider mediation prior to invoking this formal stage?

- Yes **NO** (Please tick)

If you are not prepared to consider mediation, please explain your reasons if you are able to do so:

Signed:..... Date:.....

Appendix 2

Bullying & Harassment - Guidance & Definitions of unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour can generally be described as bullying or harassing language and behaviour that is unwanted and which a person finds intimidating, embarrassing, humiliating or offensive; this can include any postings made on social media.

An individual may be exhibiting this language or behaviour consciously or unconsciously, (ie they may or may not be intending to bully/harass). However, the intention or non-intention to bully/harass should not be the determining factor in assessing whether or not someone has been exposed to bullying/harassment - it is the deed itself and the impact on the recipient that determines this.

More specific information concerning bullying and harassment is given below.

Bullying

Bullying is the use of language or behaviour either publicly or in private, which has the effect of threatening, humiliating, undermining or demeaning the recipient. Typically it consists of a series of incidents that may be trivial in themselves but have a cumulative effect on the recipient. It may arise between individual colleagues, between a group of employees and a colleague or between a manager and a subordinate.

Bullying differs from harassment in that the focus is less likely to be on a specific feature of an individual, such as gender, race or disability, than on the competence, or alleged lack of competence, of the person being bullied.

Specific examples of bullying behaviour include:

- exclusion or victimisation of an individual;
- unfairly withholding information that has an impact on a person's performance;
- constant changing of work deadlines or work guidelines to specifically undermine an individual's effectiveness
- repeated accusation of making errors without justification;
- humiliating someone in front of others, or via a social media

- deliberately ignoring opinions/views of an individual;
- removing areas of responsibility without justification;
- verbal, physical threats or intimidation;
- copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know;
- overbearing supervision/excessive monitoring or work without justification;
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading them;
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

This is not an exhaustive list.

Harassment

Harassment in general terms is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace and includes any verbal or physical abuse, unwanted behaviour or advances. This would also include any form of non-verbal harassment such as harassment via e-mail/text/social media. The actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient. Some forms of harassment can also have a specific meaning under existing legislation (e.g. sex, race and disability) and can amount to unlawful discrimination under the appropriate legislation.

Harassment can be on the grounds of a variety of attributes including sex, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age, social background, political belief and trade union membership.

Specific examples of what could be viewed as harassment in relation to these attributes include:

- demeaning/offensive remarks; displaying offensive/explicit material;
- inappropriate/abusive language;
- inappropriate stereotyping resulting in employment opportunities not being offered to an individual;
- exclusion from workplace talk/activities;
- offensive jokes;

Advice and Support

Any member of staff who believes they are experiencing bullying or harassment may seek advice and support through various options. This includes established channels to seek advice and support (eg: through their line manager, or trade union representative).

Members of staff may also choose to seek professional support through the Trust's Occupational Health arrangements. This allows members of staff to discuss problems with a qualified counsellor. This service may also be helpful to members of staff against whom an allegation of bullying or harassment has been made.

Other assistance is available through contacting helplines that have been established by external organisations/charities, such as The Andrea Adams Trust.

Seeking advice and support through any of the channels described above enables members of staff to discuss problems in confidence, to help them decide if they are experiencing bullying/harassment and to discuss any possible strategies to cope with what they are experiencing (for example, approaching a bully/harasser to inform them that their behaviour/language is upsetting, keeping a diary of incidents and confiding in another party for support or information as to how to make a complaint).

Specific contact details are listed below:

National Workplace Bullying Advice Line (Tel: 01235 212286)
Confidential helpline dedicated to offering support and advice to individuals who believe they are being bullied at work.

Andrea Adams Trust Helpline (Tel: 01237 704900}
Confidential helpline run by the UK charity dedicated to tackling workplace bullying.

Support line (Tel: 020 8554 9004}
Offer confidential emotional support to any individual on any issue.

Commission for Racial Equality, London & South England (Tel: 020 7939 0000}
Publicly funded non-governmental body set up to tackle racial discrimination and promote equality.

Equal Opportunities Commission (Tel:
0845 601 5901} Leading agency
established to eliminate sex
discrimination.

Disability Rights Commission (Tel: 08457 622 633}
Independent body set up to secure civil rights for disabled people.

Terence Higgins Trust (Tel: 0845 1221 200}
Provides advice and guidance concerning gay/lesbian issues and

HIV awareness. Samaritans, Truro (Tel: 01872 277277)

NAHT Stress Counselling Helpline (Tel 08705 234569)/NAHT Teacherline (Tel: 08000 562561)

Appendix 3

Members of staff, members of the Governing Body and Trustees, may encounter bullying or harassment by pupils/parents/the public in the course of their work. Anyone experiencing such behaviour can expect the active support of the Governing Body, Headteacher, CEO of the Trust or appropriate senior member of staff to address the situation.

The Trustees are committed to protecting members of staff whilst at work and to that end must seek to identify potential areas where members of staff may be vulnerable and to reduce the associated risks. Failure to do so could constitute a failure in the Trust's duty of care to members of staff.

Members of staff complaining of bullying or harassment by pupils/parents/the public should report the matter to the Headteacher. What action is taken will be a matter of management discretion. The complainant's perception of what has occurred will be taken fully into account when reaching a decision.

Members of the Governing Body who feel they are experiencing bullying or harassment by pupils/parents/the public should report the matter to the Chair of Trustees.

Bullying of Pupils/Parents/the Public by Members of Staff

Bullying/harassment of pupils/parents/the public by members of staff will be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

Bullying/Harassment Outside of Work

Where bullying/harassment takes place outside of working hours but is in some way linked to a working relationship, members of staff and the Governing Body are still entitled to raise the issue and make use of the informal or formal procedure of this policy.

Criminal Offences

If a criminal offence such as harassing phone calls, physical assault or indecent exposure takes place in the workplace, nothing in this policy is intended to prevent or dissuade an individual from contacting the police.

Anonymous Allegations

This policy and procedure encourages members of staff to put their name to complaints. Anonymous allegations are difficult to substantiate/prove and will only be investigated further where there is a serious allegation, which is linked to the categories listed in relation to the Whistleblowing Procedure. If there is insufficient evidence to precede the allegation will not be investigated.

Appendix 5

Mediation

Mediation can provide an early informal process for resolving conflict between staff by involving an independent impartial person who will help two individuals or groups reach an acceptable and realistic solution.

The aim is for mediation to be the first choice for resolving conflict, making the use of formal grievance procedures unnecessary, or a last resort. The advantage of mediation is the range of possible outcomes and the flexibility that it offers both parties, taking into account the fact that, very often, both parties must continue to work together on a daily basis.

Mediation is a highly effective method of resolving grievances, when the issue has not been resolved by informal discussion. It is strongly recommended that mediation is used before proceeding to the formal grievance procedure.

Refusal to participate in mediation will not bar employees from invoking the formal Grievance Procedure but it is recommended as a useful and constructive way of resolving issues, especially as both parties will usually have to remain working together at the end of the process.

Principles of Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary process which seeks to resolve complaints at an early stage and to provide an opportunity for the respective parties to discuss and search for alternative solutions together. It requires the individuals to take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. In this respect it is an ideal way of addressing issues before formal grievance processes are put into place. Mediation may also be used during the formal process of grievance resolution providing all parties agree to this approach. Mediation is not

prescriptive. It helps the parties involved to make progress in resolving their differences. It does not make judgments or determine outcomes.

How does Mediation work in practice?

A mediator will usually meet the parties separately, perhaps more than once and then bring the parties together. At the separate meetings the Mediator will ask questions to establish the nature of the complaint and any underlying causes. They will also explain their role, the rules of confidentiality, the steps in the mediation process and ask if the parties have any ground rules they wish to put forward for the joint meeting.

At the start of the joint mediation meeting the mediator will remind the parties of the mediator's role, mediation process, confidentiality and any agreed ground rules. The mediator will help facilitate the discussion between parties and, get people talking and listening and support them in reaching a joint agreement.

Part of the mediator's role is to help the parties explore the perceptions each individual or group has of the conflict - getting behind the emotion and focusing on the key issues and concerns. The mediator will help the parties identify the critical issues and barriers to resolution and facilitate discussion in order for the parties to identify practical solutions.

Mediation Meetings

The mediator will arrange a suitable venue and make arrangements for the parties to attend in a confidential and secure manner. The mediator will welcome the parties, set the scene and check that all parties are still willing to proceed with the mediation session. They will agree the ground rules and clarify the areas of conflict. Both parties will be given the opportunity to state their point of view and to be fully heard. Open and honest communication between parties will be encouraged, with the aim of resolving their conflict and building effective future working relationships.

Mediation will seek to achieve:

- Options
- solve problems or resolve conflict
- constructive agreements
- disclosures during the mediation meetings

In the event that any party involved in the mediation process discloses

personal information which suggests that further intervention or support could be helpful, then the mediator will discuss this in confidence with the individual involved and, by agreement, arrange for follow-up by an appropriate representative from the school management team or Governing Body.

Outcome

The mediation will conclude when all parties have agreed that they have a clear understanding of the issues and what has been agreed. If a resolution has been reached, a written agreement will be drawn up for both parties and the mediator to sign. This is not a legal document and will be written in clear simple language. If the issue has not been resolved, then recourse can be made to the Grievance Procedure.

Documentation

Any notes prepared by the mediator will be destroyed at the conclusion of the process and will not be disclosed to any of the parties who are the subject of the mediation or any 3rd parties for whatever reason. The only documentation retained will be copies of the agreement as signed and retained by the two parties. The mediator does not keep a copy of the written agreement.

Confidentiality - No disclosure at future stages

In the event that the matter is not resolved through mediation and the complaint progresses to a formal grievance, no information from any part of the mediation process will be disclosed.

Follow up Meetings/ Availability of Mediators

The parties will agree follow up meetings as deemed necessary. It is usual to have only one follow up meeting with the mediator.