

## Grievance Policy

**Person Responsible:** College Principal

**Date of Policy:** July 2025

**Next review date:** July 2028

### **Rationale**

Great Oaks College recognises that from time-to-time employees may wish to raise concerns, problems or complains relating to their employment. This grievance procedure has been produced in accordance with the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

### **Aims**

The aims are to ensure:  
 Consistency, transparency and fair treatment across the College.  
 An environment in which all staff are respected.  
 A place of work in which staff feel safe and valued.

### **Objectives**

Great Oaks College believes that all employees should be treated fairly and with respect. The Grievance Procedure is designed to:

- Provide a method whereby grievance arising during the course of employment can be aired and resolved.
- Allow any grievances to be settled quickly, fairly and at the lowest possible level of intervention.

### **General Principles**

A **grievance** is a concern, problem or complaint raised with the college by an employee. It can be caused by issues such as working conditions, health and safety concerns, bullying, discrimination or working relationships.

If you have a grievance, you should raise it as soon as possible but no later than three months from the date the issue or incident first occurred. If you raise a grievance outside this time limit the grievance will not be considered.

If you are no longer an employee and wish to raise an issue, you may do so using the complaints process within three months of the event in question taking place.

Grievances raised while you are subject to disciplinary proceedings will normally be heard only when the disciplinary process has been completed. Insofar as a grievance has any bearing on the disciplinary proceedings, it can be raised as a relevant issue in the course of those proceedings.

Complaints that you may have about any disciplinary action taken against you should be dealt with as an appeal under the disciplinary procedure.

Complaints that amount to an allegation of misconduct on the part of another employee will be investigated and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Informal discussion can frequently solve problems without the need for a written record and nothing in this procedure is intended to prevent you from informally raising any matter you may wish to mention.

If you are unhappy about the treatment that you have received or about any aspect of your work, in the first instance you should discuss this with your line manager, who will attempt to resolve the situation on an informal basis.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may proceed to a formal grievance hearing.

Managers and employees should raise and deal with issues promptly and should not unreasonably delay meetings.

Time limits provided in the procedure are for guidance only and may be amended if it is not practicable to adhere to them. Due regard will be given to the personal circumstances of all parties involved in the procedure.

### **Grievance Procedure**

If you wish to raise a formal grievance you should put your complaint in writing, setting out clearly the nature of your grievance, any evidence you may have and indicate the outcome that you are seeking. It should be headed "formal grievance" and sent to the Principal. Your written statement will form the basis of the hearing and any investigations so, if your grievance is unclear, you may be asked to clarify your complaint before any meeting takes place.

If your grievance relates to the conduct of the Principal, the complaint may be sent to the Chair of the College Board.

At the formal stage, the Principal (or appointed Board member, if the Principal is the subject of the grievance) will appoint an investigating officer to collect and present the facts of the grievance in an investigation report. The investigating officer will be someone who has not been directly involved in the grievance.

The hearing will be held as soon as is reasonably practicable and, subject to any need to carry out prior investigations, within seven working days of the receipt of your written complaint, wherever possible. It will be conducted by the College Principal or a Deputy Principal and attended by an HR Officer. The chair of the hearing would normally be the employee that carried out the investigation process into the grievance. You should take all reasonable steps to attend. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform your line manager as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the hearing may take place in your absence.

You have the right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or trade union representative at any formal grievance meeting or subsequent appeal. A trade union representative who is not an employed official must have been certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker. Your chosen companion may act as a witness or speak on your behalf to explain the situation more clearly but may not answer questions on your behalf. If your chosen companion is unavailable on the scheduled date the meeting will be rearranged, provided that you can propose an alternative date within five working days of the original date.

At the hearing, you will be asked to explain the nature of your complaint and what action you feel should be taken to resolve the matter.

While you will be given every opportunity to explain your case fully, you should confine your explanation to matters that are directly relevant to your complaint. The College Principal or Deputy Principal conducting the hearing will intervene if he/she thinks that the discussion is straying too far from the key issue. Where appropriate, the meeting may be adjourned to allow further investigations to take place.

You will be informed in writing of the outcome, normally within seven working days of the meeting or, if further investigation is required, within seven working days following completion of the investigation and told of any action that the organisation proposes to take as a result of your grievance. You will be notified of your right of appeal under this procedure.

### Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may make a formal appeal.

If you wish to exercise this right, you should write to the College Principal (or the Board if the grievance concerned the Principal) within seven working days of receiving the letter notifying you of the outcome of the grievance. You should state the grounds of your appeal, i.e. the basis on which you say that the result of the grievance was wrong or that the action taken as a result was inappropriate.

An appeal hearing will normally take place within 14 days of receipt of your written notice of appeal.

The appeal hearing will be conducted wherever possible by a member of the senior leadership team who was not previously involved in the case. You have a statutory right to be accompanied at any such appeal hearing. The senior leader hearing the appeal will consider the grounds that you have put forward and assess whether the conclusion reached in the original grievance hearing was appropriate.

Following the appeal meeting, you will be informed of the outcome within seven working days, wherever possible. The outcome of this meeting will be final.

### Appointment of Investigating officers and Hearing Panels

#### **Formal Grievance made in Writing to the Principal:**

Principal will appoint an investigating officer (normally a Deputy Principal)

Deputy Principal to hear Grievance and investigate

Grievance hearing conducted and decision made by Deputy Principal

If appealed, the college Principal will hold the appeal hearing

#### **If the Grievances is about a Deputy Principal:**

College Principal to hear Grievance and investigate

Grievance hearing conducted and decision made by College Principal

If appealed, a member of the Board will hold the appeal hearing

#### **If the Grievance is about the Principal:**

Member of the Board to hear Grievance and investigate

Grievance hearing conducted and decision made by Board Member only. The board will not be involved in corresponded outside of the hearing process.

If appealed, a Board member that has not been part of the grievance process will hold the appeal hearing.

If within an investigation, there appears to be misconduct that could result in disciplinary action, the grievance will be dealt with using the disciplinary policy.

### Mediation

It may be appropriate for the matter to be dealt with through mediation, depending on the nature of the grievance. This involves the appointment of a third-party mediator, who will discuss the issues raised in the grievance with all of those involved and seek to facilitate a resolution. Mediation will be used only where all parties involved in the grievance agree.

The process below will be followed:


- First contact with the parties – the mediator will meet parties separately. The aim of this first meeting is to allow everyone involved to tell their story and find out what they want out of the process.

Joint meeting

- Hearing the issues – the mediator brings the participants together and invites them to put their side of the story during a period of uninterrupted time. At this stage, the mediator will begin to summarise the principal areas of agreement and disagreement and draw up an agenda with the parties for the rest of the mediation.
- Exploring the issues – having identified the issues to explore, the mediation is now about encouraging communication between the parties, promoting understanding and empathy and changing perceptions. The aim of this part of the meeting is to begin to shift the focus from the past to the future and begin to look for constructive solutions.
- Building and writing an agreement – as the process develops, the mediator will encourage and support joint problem-solving by the parties, ensure the solution and agreements are workable and record any agreement reached.
- Closing the mediation – once an agreement has been reached, the mediator will bring the meeting to a close, provide a copy of the agreed statement to those involved and explain their responsibilities for its implementation. In some cases, no agreement is reached and other procedures may later be used to resolve the conflict.

### Implementation and Training

New employees are informed of the grievance procedure and signposted to this policy during their induction period. Existing employees have access to the grievance policy on Great Oaks College OneDrive under Staff Shared Files.

<b>Agreed by Board of Directors</b>	
Print Name	Killian O’Sullivan, Chair
Sign	
Date Agreed	8/7/2025