The Dean Close Foundation

Grievance Procedure – All Staff (W016)

Registered Charity No: 1086829

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Owner: People Services Manager

THE DEAN CLOSE FOUNDATION

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – ALL STAFF

1. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

This policy has been authorised by the Trustees of The Dean Close Foundation (the "Charity") for all of its schools, nurseries and support functions. This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Chief People Officer on behalf of the Board of Trustees. This policy does not form part of the contract of employment. This procedure applies to all employees and is intended to address concerns about work, working conditions or working relationships.

The Dean Close Foundation encourages the resolution of grievances as quickly as possible. Every effort should be made by both parties to resolve the matter informally, where appropriate, before commencing the formal grievance procedure.

All complaints and grievances will be dealt with as promptly as reasonably possible, and both parties should endeavour to reach an agreement at the earliest appropriate stage.

At any stage of the procedure, a member of the People Team may attend upon request by either the staff member or the manager. Where a grievance is raised during another formal process, such as a disciplinary process, the Foundation will consider whether it is appropriate to pause that process, deal with both matters concurrently, or address the grievance within the existing process, depending on the circumstances.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

Our aim is to deal with grievances sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of all individuals involved. All employees must treat any information communicated to them in connection with a grievance or grievance appeal as confidential.

Employees, and anyone accompanying them, must not make electronic recordings of any meetings conducted under this procedure.

3. RAISING GRIEVANCES INFORMALLY

Most grievances can be resolved informally through discussions between the employee and their Line Manager. However, if an employee feels unable to speak with their Line Manager, because the complaint concerns them for example, the employee should speak to a more senior manager or the People Team. If this does not resolve the issue, the employee should follow the formal procedure below.

4. FORMAL GRIEVANCES

If informal measures are unsuccessful, the individual should, in the first instance, raise the matter with their immediate Line Manager in writing, copying in the People Team. However, if the grievance relates directly to the immediate Line Manager, the employee should raise their concern in writing directly with the People Team.

5. GRIEVANCE HEARING

The People Team will organise a grievance hearing as soon as reasonably practicable. Attendees at this meeting should be the employee with the grievance, the manager hearing the grievance, a representative from the People Team and the employee's companion, if applicable. Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at the formal grievance hearing and subsequent appeal, if one is required. The companion may address the meeting, make representations and confer with the employee, but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf.

Where an employee requires reasonable adjustments to participate effectively in the process, they should inform the People Team as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be considered.

The purpose of the grievance hearing is to enable the employee to explain their grievance, how they feel it should be resolved, and to assist the manager hearing the grievance in making an informed decision based on the available evidence and the representations made by the employee.

If the employee fails to attend the meeting without good reason, or is repeatedly unable to attend after reasonable attempts have been made to rearrange the meeting, the Foundation may proceed on the basis of the available information or treat the grievance as withdrawn.
Following the grievance meeting, it may be necessary to carry out an investigation into the grievance. The investigation required may depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary on a case-by-case basis.

This may involve interviewing and taking statements from the employee, other witnesses and/or reviewing relevant documents. This will be done as swiftly as possible, but delays can occur due to absence, availability and evidence collation.

Following the meeting and completion of any subsequent investigations, the employee will receive the outcome of their grievance in writing, confirming whether the grievance has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. The outcome letter will also detail the steps taken to investigate the grievance, any actions that will be taken as a result, and the employee's right of appeal.
If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome of the grievance hearing, they have the right to appeal. The time limit for this escalation is five working days from receipt of the grievance hearing outcome letter.

6. APPEAL HEARING

The employee should write formally to the People Team within five working days of receipt of their outcome letter. This letter should clearly state the grounds of appeal, i.e. the basis on which the employee believes that the result of the grievance hearing was wrong or that the action taken as a result was inappropriate.

An appeal hearing will be arranged as soon as reasonably practicable. Present at the meeting should be an appropriate manager hearing the appeal, the employee, a representative of the People Team and the employee's companion, if applicable. The manager hearing the appeal will not have been involved in any prior decision-making in the grievance process.

It may be necessary to conduct further investigations into the appeal. The amount of investigation

required will depend on the nature of the issued raised and will vary on a case-by-case basis.

Following the meeting and any subsequent investigations, the outcome of the appeal will be sent to the employee. The appeal outcome may uphold, partially uphold or reject the appeal and may confirm, vary or overturn the original decision. This should normally be sent within five working days.

The decision taken at this meeting will be final.

Records relating to grievances will be handled confidentially and retained in accordance with the Foundation's data protection policies and applicable legal requirements.

7. WHISTLEBLOWING

Where a concern relates to wrongdoing in the public interest, such as fraud, malpractice, mismanagement, breach of health and safety law, safeguarding concerns or any other illegal or unethical act, employees may wish to raise this under the Foundation's Whistleblowing Policy (W035) rather than through the grievance procedure. The Whistleblowing Policy sets out the process for reporting such concerns and the protections available to individuals who do so.