



Alfred Lord Tennyson School	Page 1 of 13
Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure	Issued: February 24
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Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure

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1. Purpose and scope

Alfred Lord Tennyson School (ALTS) aims to provide a positive working environment for all staff. However, the organisation recognises that, from time to time, employees may seek redress for grievances relating to employment. The Governing Body accepts the principle that if individuals have a grievance relating to their employment, they have a right to express it. This includes allegations of acts or statements of discrimination by managers or

employees, which contravene legislation and school policy on matters of equality. The procedure does not apply to disciplinary or capability matters, for which separate procedures exist.

This Grievance Policy and Procedure Document aims to provide a framework within which problems or concerns can be dealt with quickly and fairly and be resolved with minimal disruption to the individuals involved in the process. This policy and procedure also aims to help guide all those involved through the actual process in detail.

2. Employees covered by this procedure

This procedure is applicable to all staff who work at ALTS and who are employed by the school. It is not applicable to supply staff employed by an agency, or to contractors' staff working at the school.

3. Policy

ALTS is committed to ensuring that employees can raise problems or concerns about their work, working environment or working relationships, with an appropriate manager and without fear of reprisal or victimisation.

ALTS encourages managers and employees to try and resolve grievances informally in the first instance, as this enables speedy resolution to problems and works well where there is a good relationship between the manager and employee. However, the school recognises this may not be possible in all cases and there will be times when a grievance has to be dealt with in accordance with the formal stages of the grievance procedure.

A grievance is defined as any issue relating to work, working environment or working relationships about which an employee may feel dissatisfied. However, it is not intended to be used as a counter reaction by an employee to any act that the school is taking, or contemplating taking with regards to any aspect of their employment, unless it can be demonstrated that the organisation has acted inappropriately in respect of this action.

Issues, which may result in the procedure being invoked, include, but are not limited to:

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Health and safety
- Work relations
- Bullying and harassment
- New working practices
- Working environment
- Organisational change
- Breach of confidentiality
- Equal opportunities

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Line Management Responsibility

Line Managers should ensure that:

- All employees are aware of and have access to this policy and procedure and know how to resolve problems or concerns should they arise
- This policy and procedure is applied consistently and equitably across the school
- Issues are dealt with sensitively and in a strictly confidential manner
- Employees do not suffer any detriment for bringing forward any complaints under this policy
- Employees are not obstructed from pursuit of a grievance or put under pressure to withdraw a grievance

4.2. Employees' Responsibility

Employees should ensure that:

- Grievances are raised with their line manager, or their line manager's manager if more appropriate, at the earliest opportunity
- Issues are not discussed with anyone other than those involved in the process i.e. line manager, investigator or accompanying work colleague.

5. Procedure

5.1. Dealing with Grievances Informally

Most routine complaints and grievances are best resolved informally in discussion with the employee's immediate Line Manager. An employee wishing to raise a grievance should, in the first instance, raise the matter with their immediate line manager as soon as possible after the cause of the grievance has occurred and not later than ten working days after the event – see Appendix 1.

The line manager(s) should discuss the grievance with the employee with an aim to settling the grievance informally. The school recognises most routine complaints and grievances can be resolved informally and would hope that the majority of concerns can be addressed at this stage.

The school will endeavour to complete the informal stage within ten working days of the initial grievance being raised. If it is anticipated that more time will be needed, an appropriate timescale will be agreed between the line manager and complainant.

If an employee is uncertain as to what action to take or if the grievance involves personal or sensitive issues which are considered inappropriate to raise directly with line management, the employee may prefer to speak in confidence to the Headteacher, or, if the grievance is against the Headteacher, to the Chair of Governors.

5.2. Mediation

Mediation is a structured series of conversations, used as part of the informal resolution process, which help resolve conflicts. In some cases it can resolve the problem without the need to pursue the formal grievance. Employees may request this from line managers or a more senior line manager and their request will be considered seriously.

Any discussions, which take place as part of mediation, will not form part of any future grievance.

An independent third party or mediator can sometimes help resolve grievance issues before it is necessary to invoke the formal procedure. Mediation is a voluntary process where the mediator helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement. Any agreement comes from those in dispute, not from the mediator. The mediator is not there to judge, to say one person is right and the other wrong, or to tell those involved in the mediation what they should do. The mediator is the facilitator of the process of seeking to resolve the problem, but not the outcome.

Both/all parties must agree to seeking solutions through mediation before this takes place.

The school will source an external mediation provider for this purpose. Mediators will work individually or in pairs as co-mediators.

There are no hard-and-fast rules for when mediation is appropriate, but it can be used:

- For conflict involving colleagues of a similar job or grade, or between a line manager and their staff
- At any stage in the conflict as long as any on-going formal procedures are put in abeyance
- To rebuild relationships after a formal dispute has been resolved
- To address a range of issues, including relationship breakdown, personality clashes, communication problems and bullying and harassment

Mediation is not part of the school's formal grievance procedure. However, if agreed, the grievance procedure will be suspended in an attempt to resolve the grievance through that route. If mediation is not successful, then the grievance procedure will be re-commenced.

If the matter is not resolved informally then the formal grievance procedure may be followed. The formal grievance procedure may be started if the employee prefers to raise a formal grievance, even though they have not engaged in informal resolution. If this is the case, the manager (if appropriate) should explore with the employee the reason why they do not wish to attempt informal resolution before raising the matter formally.

5.3. Formal Grievance Procedure – Stage 1

The employee should submit a Notification of Formal Grievance form (see Appendix 3), providing details about their complaint, including, where relevant, examples with dates – see Formal procedure Appendix 2.

The grievance should be submitted in the first instance to the Headteacher, who will, taking into account the nature of the complaint, determine who should investigate the grievance. For example, it would not be appropriate for the line manager to conduct the grievance meeting if the employee's grievance involves them or a previous grievance was raised against them. Nor would it be appropriate for a line manager to investigate the grievance if they have already dealt with the grievance at an earlier, informal stage.

If the grievance is about the Headteacher, the Notification of Formal Grievance form (see Appendix 3) should be submitted to the Chair of Governors, via the school office.

The employee must be invited, in writing, to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance in more detail, to state what they want to achieve from the grievance process and how they think their grievance should be resolved. Reasonable notice of the meeting must be given.

The employee must be reminded of their statutory right to bring a work colleague with them to the meeting if they so wish. The meeting should take place, wherever possible, within 14 calendar days of the grievance being received.

During the meeting an independent note taker should make an accurate account of what was said and by whom. Before the meeting draws to a close the employee should be informed of any further investigation that is required and when they should expect to hear the outcome of their grievance. Whilst resolution of grievances will always be given high priority, depending on the nature of the grievance realistic timescales should be agreed at the outset of the process.

The Investigating Officer should not make a decision at the meeting but should allow some time to consider the grievance and carry out all necessary investigations.

Once the Investigating Officer has carried out a full investigation, they should inform the employee of the outcome of the meeting in writing and, where possible, within 14 calendar days. The employee should be informed, at this stage, of their right to appeal the decision if they so wish.

Possible outcomes

Grievance Upheld – If, following a full and thorough investigation, the grievance is substantiated then the grievance is likely to be upheld in which case the Manager investigating the grievance should set out what action they intend to take to resolve the grievance.

Grievance Not Upheld – If there is no, or insufficient evidence to support the grievance.

Grievance Partially Upheld – Where, in a grievance involving multiple points, some points of the grievance can be substantiated but some cannot, it is possible for the manager who is hearing the grievance to partially uphold it.

If the Employee accepts the outcome and does not wish to appeal, the matter will be considered as resolved.

5.4. Right of Appeal - Stage 2

All employees have the right to appeal against the outcome of a grievance; such appeals will be considered by three members of the Governing Body. Panel members will have had no prior knowledge of the grievance. To exercise this right, the employee should complete the Appeal against outcome of Formal Grievance (see Appendix 4) within 14 days of the outcome of the Formal Grievance. If an employee submits their appeal late, a letter will be sent asking for the reasons why the appeal should be heard out of time.

Appeals will only be considered on the following grounds:

- The employee believes the sanction/decision is unfair
- The employee believes that the application of the policy was flawed or inadequate and the procedure leading to the sanction/decision has not been applied consistently or fairly
- New evidence has come to light, which was not available at the hearing/meeting and which may make a difference to the original decision

In all cases, the employee must be able to provide evidence in support of their appeal on any of the grounds listed above. Appeals are not intended to be a complete re-hearing of the same information unless there is evidence that the original decision was flawed or procedure was not followed.

Once the appeal has been considered, the employee will be informed in writing of the outcome within the timescales described in the appeals policy. Where this is not possible, an explanation for the delay will be provided and a revised date provided.

At the conclusion of the appeals process, the employee will be informed that the decision is final and that the internal grievance procedure has now been exhausted.

Additional Information

Where, after investigation, it is considered that an employee, by raising a grievance, is acting out of frivolous or vexatious motives, they may not be permitted to pursue or continue with their grievance and may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

If an employee has concerns over any possible wrongdoing within ALTS, they should refer to the school Whistleblowing Policy [1].

An employee's grievance will always be considered in line with the three-stage procedure set out in this policy. However, in circumstances where an employee has raised a written grievance and leaves employment of the school before the grievance has been concluded, it may not be reasonably practical to hold meetings in line with this procedure. In these situations, the line manager would only be required to respond to the complainant's grievance in writing.

5.5. Grievances raised by former employees

For employee's who leave the school and subsequently raise a grievance a two-step procedure will apply.

Step One: The employee must set down in writing the nature of the alleged grievance and send a written complaint to the Headteacher.

Step Two: The Headteacher must acknowledge receipt of the grievance and outline the length of time it will take to respond to the former employee. The Headteacher must set out a response in writing to the employee, stating the findings and outcome of the grievance.

If received within 6 months of them leaving ALTS an investigation will be considered. In such instances the grievance will be sent to a delegated representative of the Governing Body, who will review the issues raised and decide whether a full investigation is necessary.

If a grievance is received from an ex-employee outside of this timeframe, it may be appropriate to investigate if it relates to a current employee or could have a detrimental effect on ALTS.

The complainant does not have a right to appeal in these circumstances

Confidentiality

ALTS acknowledges and commits to treating issues raised under the grievance process in a confidential manner. Employees who invoke the grievance process are expected to adopt the same approach and not discuss the matter with anybody other than the employee's work colleague who would be accompanying the employee at any subsequent meeting.

6. Policies relating to this policy:

Whistle Blowing [1]

Staff Code of Conduct [2]
Teachers Pay [3]
Support Staff Pay [4]
Child Protection and Safeguarding [5]
Equality [6]

7. References

- [1] Alfred Lord Tennyson School, “Whistleblowing Policy”.
- [2] Alfred Lord Tennyson School, “Staff Code of Conduct”.
- [3] Alfred Lord Tennyson School, “Teachers' Pay Policy”.
- [4] Alfred Lord Tennyson School, “Support Staff Pay Policy”.
- [5] Alfred Lord Tennyson School, “Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy”.
- [6] Alfred Lord Tennyson School, “Equality Policy”.
- [7] Alfred Lord Tennyson School, “Online Safety Policy”.
- [8] Alfred Lord Tennyson School, “ICT Acceptable Use Policy”.

8. Safeguarding

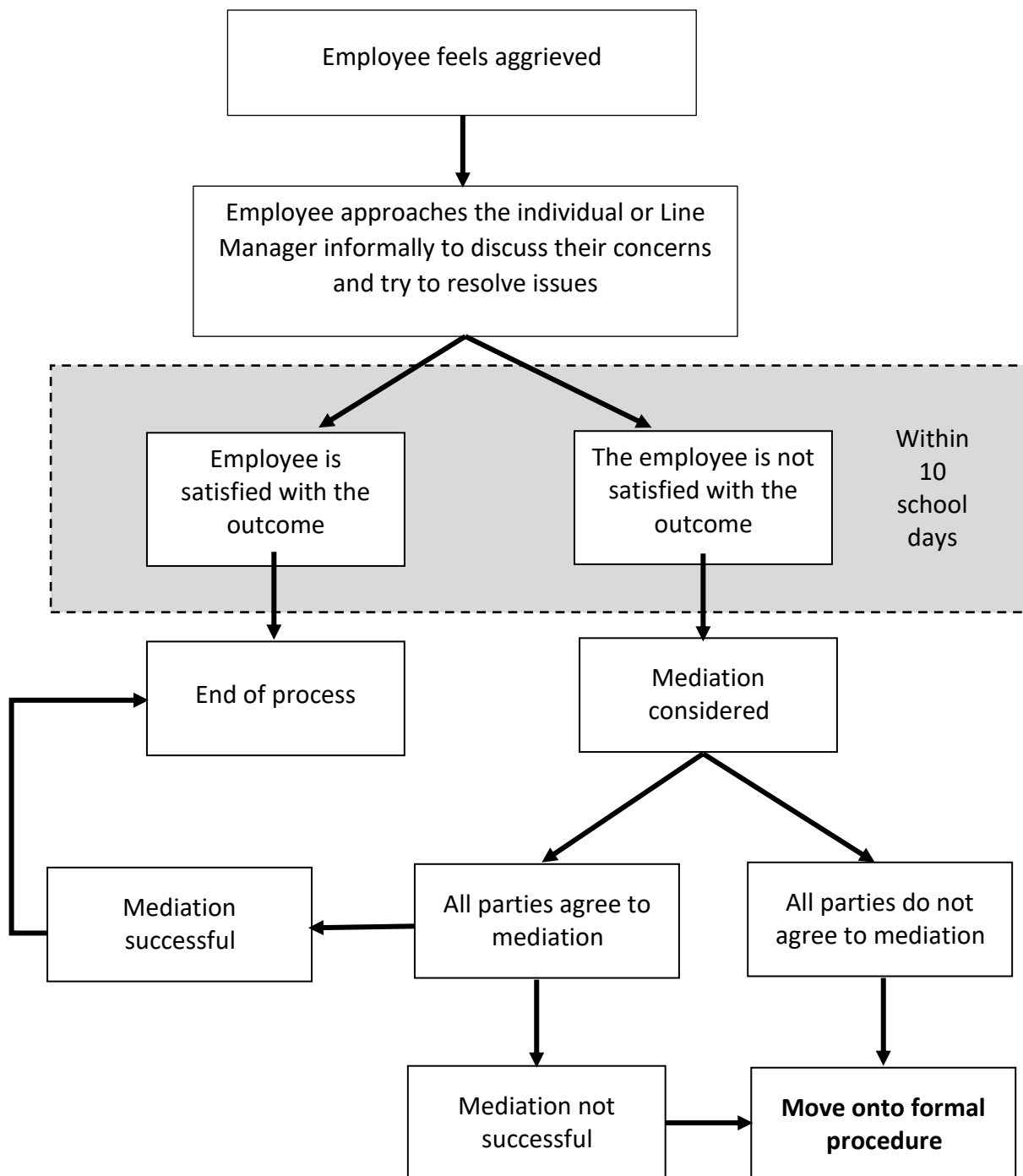
Safeguarding our children is our priority – see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy [5]

Online safety lessons are conducted regularly within the school to help to ensure that children stay safe online – see Online Safety Policy [7] and ICT Acceptable Use Policy [8].

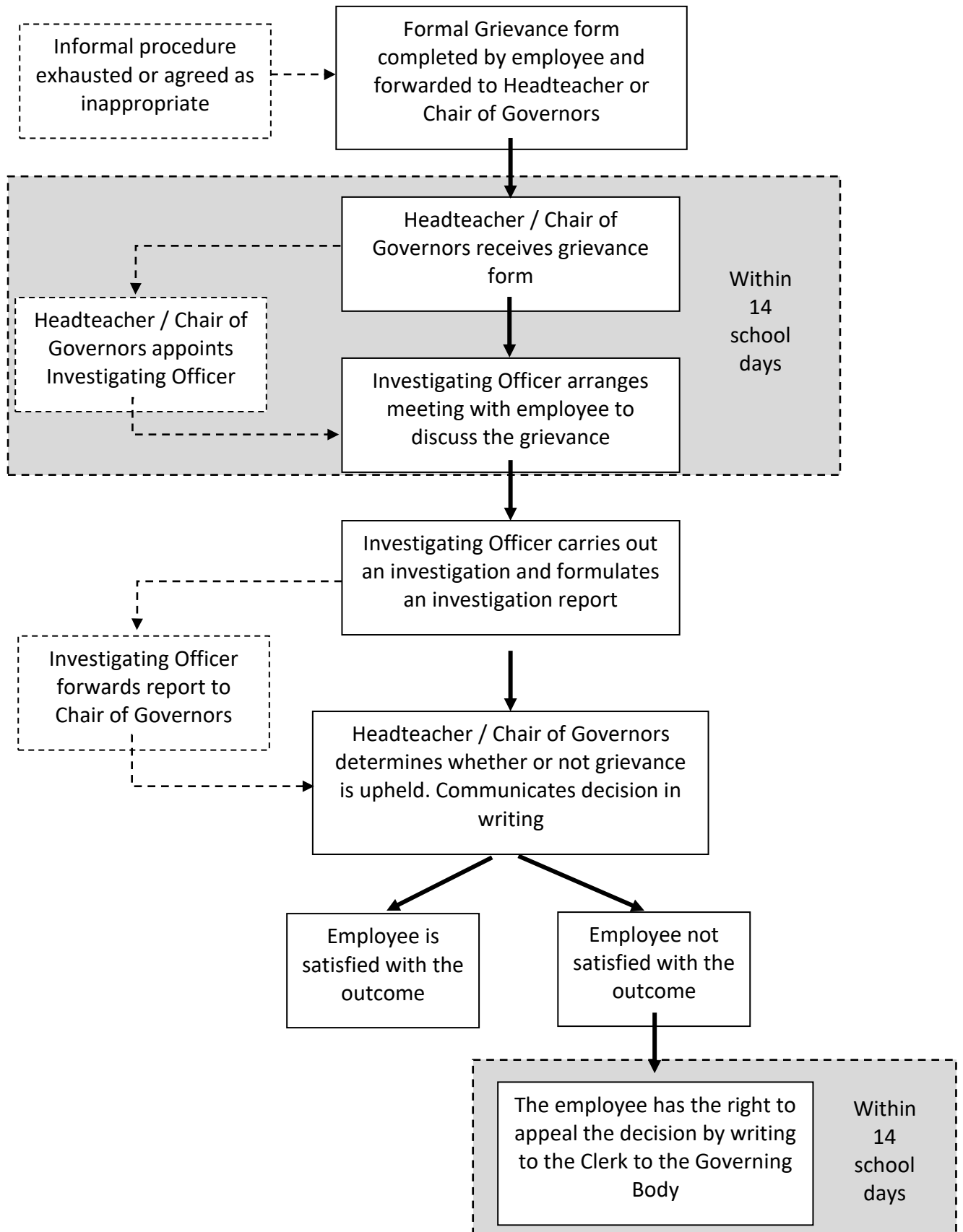
All concerns must be reported to our Designated Safeguarding Leads:

Mrs K O’Connor, Mrs S Smith, Mrs J Appleby and Mrs L Bunker.

Appendix 1. Informal Procedure



Appendix 2. Formal Procedure



Appendix 3. Notification of Formal Grievance



Headteacher: Mrs Kelly O'Connor

This form may be used to submit a grievance in accordance with the formal grievance procedure.

The completed form should be handed to your line manager, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors in accordance with the practice described in this document. You should be sure to sign and date the form and should keep a copy for your own records.

Name:

Post held:

Department: Describe briefly the nature of your grievance (continue on a separate sheet if necessary – please attach any extra sheets).

When did you first raise your grievance and with whom?

What action has been taken to resolve your grievance in the informal stage?

What would you like as the outcome of raising your grievance?

Signed

Date

Appendix 4. Appeal against outcome of Formal Grievance



Headteacher: Mrs Kelly O'Connor

This form should be used to submit an appeal against the outcome of a formal grievance.

The completed form should be handed to the School Business Manager or Headteacher, in a sealed envelope addressed to the Chair of Governors at the school. You should be sure to sign and date the form and should keep a copy for your own records.

Name:

Post held:

What was the outcome of the investigation to the formal grievance you raised (as described on the letter you will have received)?

What is the reason for your appeal?
You should be aware that the only valid reasons for an appeal of this nature are:

- The employee believes the sanction/decision is unfair
- The employee believes that the application of the policy was flawed or inadequate and the procedure leading to the sanction/decision has not been applied consistently or fairly
- New evidence has come to light, which was not available at the hearing/meeting and which may make a difference to the original decision

What evidence do you have to support your appeal?

Do you have any additional evidence to present, that you did not present as part of your initial formal grievance?

[Empty rectangular box]

Appendix 4. Appeal against outcome of Formal Grievance (cont.)

What would you like as the outcome of this appeal?

[Empty rectangular box for response]

Signed

Date