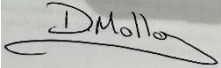
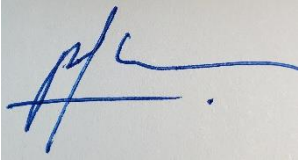




# First **Star** Scholars **UK**

## Grievance Policy

<b>Date of Last Review</b>	<b>29/10/2024</b>
<b>Review Cycle</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Date (Month/Year) of Next Review</b>	<b>10/2025</b>
<b>Date Policy was Ratified</b>	<b>29/10/2024</b>
<b>Named Lead for Writing/Review</b>	<b>Emily Hollis MBE</b>
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>CEO</b> 	<b>29/10/24</b>
<b>FSSUK Board of Trustees – Chair</b> 	

## **Introduction**

If an employee has an issue at work, it is usually a good idea for them to raise it informally first.

First Star Scholars UK (the charity) will respond even if the issue is raised informally.

A grievance procedure is a formal way for an employee to raise a problem or complaint.

The employee can raise a grievance if:

- they feel raising it informally has not worked
- they do not want it dealt with informally
- it's a very serious issue, for example sexual harassment or whistleblowing (see separate Whistleblowing Policy)

The charity follows the ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures:

<https://www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures/html>

## **Dealing with grievances informally**

If you have a grievance or complaint about your work or someone you work with, you should start by speaking with the Director of Operations wherever possible. You may be able to agree a solution informally between you.

## **Formal grievance**

If the matter is serious or you wish to raise it formally you should put the grievance in writing to the Director of Operations. You should keep to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive.

If your grievance is against the Director of Operations and you feel unable to approach them, you should raise it with the CEO. If your grievance is against the CEO, or any charity Trustee, you should raise it with the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If your grievance is against the Chair of the Board of Trustees, you should raise it with another Trustee.

The letter or email should include:

- what the grievance is about
- any evidence, for example a payslip or employment contract
- what you want us to do about it

It is a good idea to be specific where possible. It is also helpful to be realistic.

You can get help from Citizens Advice on:

- [writing a grievance letter](#)
- [checking you've included the right information](#)

## **Related grievances**

If there are two or more related grievances, we will:

- still follow the formal procedure, for all the grievances
- keep information confidential
- consider what each employee wants
- explain to the employees how we are dealing with the grievances

There is some flexibility in how to run the grievance procedure in these situations. For example, we could decide to have a single meeting to cover all the grievances, if the employees agree.

Each employee still has the right to their own grievance meeting in which employees who are part of the grievance are not present.

## **Using mediation**

Mediation can be used at any stage. Mediation involves an independent, impartial person working with both sides to find a solution.

The mediator can be someone from inside or outside our organisation. Both sides will need to agree to mediation.

## **If anything similar has happened before**

To keep things fair we will do all of the following:

- aim to follow the same fair procedure
- gather evidence from all sides
- consider all the information

## **Keeping written records**

We will keep written records of what takes place during the grievance procedure. This includes:

- what the grievance is about
- any decisions and actions taken, and why
- whether the employee appeals the grievance outcome

In line with data protection law, records will be confidential and only kept for as long as required. For further information on record keeping, please refer to our Data Protection Policy.

## **Protecting personal information**

We will keep all personal information confidential. For further information, please refer to our Data Protection Policy.

## **If the grievance is about someone else at work**

Before getting more information and evidence, we will:

- avoid assuming anything about the grievance or the people involved
- be sensitive to the circumstances and needs of the person the grievance is about, as well as the person who raised the grievance

### **Deciding on disciplinary action**

We will not discipline anyone involved in a grievance before getting all the information and evidence. Further information regarding our disciplinary processes can be found in our Disciplinary Policy.

If there are concerns about employees in a grievance case working together while the grievance is investigated, we will consider what we can do to mitigate this in the short term.

If we take any type of action, we will make clear to the employees that it is not a punishment but a temporary change while we look into the grievance.

### **Investigating**

We will investigate the grievance so that we can make a fair decision about the grievance. In the first instance the investigator would be the Director of Operations and in the case of the grievance being made against the Director of Operations the investigator would be the CEO. In the case of the grievance being made against the CEO the investigator would be the Chair of the Board of Trustees. In the case of the grievance being made against the Chair of the Board of Trustees the investigator would be another suitable Trustee.

### **Criminal and/or safeguarding matters**

If the grievance could be a criminal matter, for example it is related to an assault, the police might need to be involved.

Where the grievance is of a safeguarding nature, we will also follow the processes and procedures as outlined in our Safeguarding Policy, contacting external services/agencies as required and appropriate.

### **Looking after employees' wellbeing and mental health**

Going through a grievance procedure can be very stressful for everyone involved. This includes:

- the person the grievance is about
- the person raising the grievance

As well as regular, confidential communication, we can arrange any meetings in a more private and comfortable location if this would help the employee.

The employee can also seek support from our Director of Operations who is a qualified Mental Health First Aider and Senior Mental Health Leader.

### **Grievances about a customer, client or anyone else who does not work for the organisation**

We will follow the formal grievance procedure in the same way.

### **If a grievance is raised while a disciplinary is taking place**

We can pause the disciplinary procedure and deal with the grievance first. If the disciplinary and grievance cases are related, we can deal with both at the same time.

### **If a grievance is raised by more than one employee**

If more than one person has the same grievance, it might be best to raise it collectively. The employees could agree on one person to raise it and communicate for all of them. The employees could get more information from their trade union.

### **Grievance meeting**

You will be called to a meeting, usually within five working days, to discuss your grievance. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

We will keep a confidential record of:

- what is said at the meeting
- evidence we have gathered
- any decisions or actions taken

After the meeting we will give you a decision in writing, usually within 5 working days.

If we need more information before making a decision, we will inform you of this and the timescale.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

If you need any reasonable adjustments, for example for a disability, speak to the Director of Operations.

### **Your right to be accompanied**

By law, any employee can bring a 'companion' (relevant person) to a grievance meeting. This is known as 'the right to be accompanied'.

The right is to be accompanied by:

- someone you work with

- a trade union representative who is certified or trained in acting as a companion
- an official employed by a trade union

You should tell us as soon as possible if you would like a companion and who they will be so we can make arrangements in good time.

Under discrimination law, we will consider a disabled employee's request to bring someone else for additional support, such as a carer.

### **The outcome**

After following a fair grievance procedure, we will decide on the best outcome based on:

- the findings from meetings and investigations
- what is fair and reasonable
- what we have done in any similar cases before

We will inform the employee of the outcome as soon as possible and in writing, for example in a letter or email.

If the grievance involved other people in the organisation and it was upheld, we might need to start a disciplinary procedure. More information can be found in our Disciplinary Policy.

### **If we decide no action is needed**

To make sure there is no bad feeling, we will talk privately with the employee.

### **Appeal**

If you want to appeal against a grievance decision, you must do so within five working days, in writing to the CEO.

You will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within five working days, with the CEO. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

After the meeting the CEO will give you a decision, usually within five working days. This decision is final.

### **If the employee needs to take things further**

If the employee feels they have tried everything and their problem is still not resolved, they could in some cases make a claim to an employment tribunal.

### **Sharing information**

Under data protection law (UK GDPR), we will get consent from the person who provided information before sharing it. This might mean that we need to make some information anonymous before sharing it. You can find out more about data protection on the Information

Commissioner's Office (ICO) website. Further information can also be found in our Data Protection Policy.

**Other documentation**

**This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

- Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

**Version Control - Approval and Review**

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Main Change</b>	<b>Review Period</b>
1.0	Diarmuid Molloy	29 October 2024	New policy format approved	Annually