



Grievance Policy

Review frequency:	Date of last review:	Date of next review:
Annually	27 August 2017	31 August 2018

For Students:

Aim

The School aims to resolve all disputes, including Academic, Administrative, Financial or otherwise, involving the School, Staff and the students. Due consideration would be given to all the facts before any solutions are recommended.

Policy

1. A dispute is recognized as such if the School and a student or parent do not agree to a decision of the School
2. The dispute resolution mechanism has three structural components which shall be followed sequentially:
 - Resolution by a staff member or a team appointed by the Head of School/Principal
 - Resolution by the Head of School/Principal
 - Resolution by reference to a third party like MEPS, State tribunal, etc
3. All "disputes" shall be given by the parent to the School in writing, stating clearly the issue, the facts and the area of disagreement. Modes of receiving formal feedback:
 - Email / School Eric
 - Preprimary.svkm@gmail.com for academic feedback pertaining to the Pre-primary Section
 - CoordinatorPrimary.svkm@gmail.com for Academic feedback pertaining to the Primary Section
 - Secondaryincharge.svkm@gmail.com for Academic feedback pertaining to the Lower Secondary Section
 - Igcseincharge.svkm@gmail.com for Academic feedback pertaining to IGCSE
 - Viceprincipal.svkm@gmail.com for A level and General Administrative queries.
 - Accounts@svkmis.ac.in for all fee and other financial transactions
 - With a Cc to the Principal @
 - Principal.svkm@gmail.com ; principal@svkmis.ac.in
4. Parents can meet the Subject teachers'/Class teachers/Coordinators/Principal with prior appointment as per schedule mentioned in the School Eric.

5. All written complaints shall be acknowledged by the School within 2 working days. All written complaints shall be acknowledged by the respective Principals/Senior Coordinators/Head of Admissions within 3 working days. Some feedback may require additional steps subsequent to the first response which shall be communicated to the parents.
6. At the first instance, the Head of School/Principal shall ask a staff member or a team of staff (concerned teacher or administrative staff may also be included) to investigate the facts and recommend resolution options. These shall be discussed with the parents and an agreement shall be attempted.
7. If necessary, parents may be invited for a face to face meeting with the Principal or Head of School to discuss the possible solutions and reach closure.
8. In case of continued disagreement, the matter shall be taken up by the Head of School/Principal, who, in consultation with the Management Committee, shall explore the matter further.
9. In the event of disagreement after this stage, the School shall advise the parents to refer the matter through third party mediation.
10. Every effort will be made to resolve complaints within 21 days of having received written notification from a parent, provided no, third-party intervention occurs.
11. All feedback/complaints are considered resolved and closed by the school if the school does not receive any more correspondence from the parent relating to the feedback after 7 working days from date of resolution (written reply from the school on its decision).
12. Transport-related feedback cases are responded to by the transport contractor. The school shall, however, monitor the contractor's responsiveness to and resolutions of all complaints.

For Staff:

The school is committed to creating and sustaining a working environment that is fair to all and free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying. Everyone is responsible for their own behaviour and should treat colleagues with dignity, respect and courtesy and ensure that they are valued for their skills and abilities.

The Grievance Policy is designed to ensure that concerns, problems and complaints arising in the course of employment can be raised and resolved quickly and in a fair and reasonable manner.

The Grievance procedure exists to provide a mechanism for employees to raise concerns that are not covered by other procedures.

Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that they comply with this policy and to be aware of their own behaviour and the effect it may have on other people and to treat everyone with respect and dignity.

General work issues

For example, issues regarding terms and conditions of employment, health and safety, working practices or working relationships.

Bullying

This is behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting and the misuse of power. It is behaviour that has created working conditions or an environment that is hostile, degrading and/or humiliating and that a reasonable person could justifiably complain about.

Harassment

This is unwanted behaviour which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Employees can complain of behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

Victimisation

This occurs where a person is treated less favourably than another because they have brought proceedings, given evidence or information, rejected advances or complained about the behaviour of someone who has been harassing, discriminating against or in some other way intimidating them.

Resolving a grievance

It is in the best interests of everyone to ensure that grievances are dealt with quickly, equitably and resolved informally wherever possible. In the first instance, employees are asked to try to discuss the issue with the Head of School and try to reach an early resolution.

Informal process

Where an employee has concerns about the behaviour of an individual, they should tell them that their behaviour is causing concern or offence, explain the effect that it is having on them and that it must stop. The employee may not be aware that their actions cause offence to others and once it is highlighted this may resolve the situation.

If an employee feels unable to discuss the matter with the person causing offence, they may wish to speak to their Coordinator to raise the matter on their behalf.

If the matter is not resolved informally or if there are specific circumstances that make the informal route inappropriate, the formal grievance procedure should be followed.

Mediation

In some cases, mediation can help resolve problems, especially those involving working relationships, and can be a positive and supportive way of resolving a grievance.

Where a Head of School has been unable to resolve the issue through discussion with the employee(s), formal mediation carried out by a trained and independent mediator, may be considered. Participation in mediation must be by mutual agreement and in consultation with the Human Resources Department, who will be able to provide details of mediation services.

Where mediation is successful and an outcome is achieved, it will be binding upon both parties and will close the grievance procedure regarding the issue.

Formal process

Where it has not been possible to resolve a grievance informally, the employee can choose to raise a formal grievance. The employee must set out their concerns, providing as much information as possible to enable the grievance to be dealt with effectively.

The Grievance letter should be submitted to the Head of School, where the grievance concerns a colleague. If the grievance concerns the Head of School, it should be submitted to the School Managing Committee.

The employee should retain a copy of the letter for reference purposes and forward a copy to the HR department – hr@svkm.ac.in

If an employee submits a formal grievance without attempting to resolve the situation informally and where there are no specific circumstances that make the informal route inappropriate, the Head of School should encourage the employee to participate in the informal process in the first instance.

Grievance investigation

Where it is felt that the informal process has been exhausted, a thorough investigation of the allegations and/or issues should be carried out. Any investigation must look impartially at the issues raised in the grievance and reach any conclusion based on the facts and evidence.

Investigating Officer

In most circumstances, where a grievance is raised against a colleague, the Head of School will be the Investigating Officer.

Where a grievance is raised about the Head of School, the School Managing Committee will be responsible for investigating the concerns. The SMC may invite an Investigating Officer to look into the grievance on their behalf. In this situation, after thoroughly investigating the grievance, the Investigating Officer will report their findings back to the SMC who will consider the recommendations and make a decision as to the appropriate outcome.

Timescales

It is important for the investigation to be concluded as soon as reasonably practicable. The Investigating Officer should endeavour to investigate the grievance and provide the outcome to the employee who raised the grievance within 30 school days of the Formal Grievance letter being received or where an Investigating Officer needs to be appointed, within 30 school days from the date of that appointment. All parties should be aware that an extension to this timescale may need to be agreed, depending on the complexity of the case.

Grievance meetings

Employee raising the grievance

The Investigating Officer will arrange a meeting with the employee raising the grievance to discuss the issues in more detail within 10 school days of the Formal Grievance letter received or where an Investigating Officer is appointed, within 10 school days of that appointment.

The employee is entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a coordinator or a work colleague. The individual accompanying the employee must not be someone whose presence would prejudice the meeting or who has a conflict of interest.

If the person accompanying the employee cannot attend on the date suggested, the Investigating Officer should suggest another date, not more than 5 school days after the original date. This time limit may be extended by mutual agreement.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- clarify the nature of the grievance;
- determine if mediation is an option;
- identify what further information is needed;
- discuss the employee's proposals for resolving the issues; and ☐ establish if a longer timescale will be necessary.

At the end of the meeting the Investigating Officer should give the employee an indication of when they might reasonably expect a response to the grievance. If the Investigating Officer feels that a response cannot be provided within 30 school days, bearing in mind any additional investigations they feel may be necessary, an extension to the timescales should be agreed at this time. Where unavoidable delays occur, e.g. due to annual leave or sickness, the Investigating Officer should contact the employee, in writing, to agree revised timescales and to provide an update on the progress of the investigation.

Employee who is the subject of grievance

Where a grievance is raised against another employee, it is important to approach the situation sensitively and carefully. The Investigating Officer should generally start by talking privately to the employee to alert them to the fact that a concern has been raised by a fellow employee. Following this, the employee will be invited to a meeting to discuss the issue(s) in more detail as part of the investigation process. The employee is entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a work colleague.

During the grievance investigation meeting, the Investigating Officer will explain the allegation(s) that have been made against the employee and will provide them with an opportunity to put forward their understanding of the situation.

Witnesses

In some circumstances, the Investigating Officer will be required to interview witnesses. Every effort should be made to avoid disclosing any confidential information unnecessarily by the Investigating Officer; however, the confidentiality of any witness cannot be guaranteed.

Where the Investigating Officer feels it is necessary to meet witnesses, they should also write to invite them to a meeting. The Investigating Officer must think carefully about who to interview as a witness, bearing in mind the need to show a balanced investigation. Where particular witnesses are chosen from a group, the Investigating Officer must ensure that they have applied a clear and robust method of identifying which individuals to meet with.

interviewed; in this context it means that whilst the interview is held in a confidential setting the subsequent statement may be read as part of the formal procedures.

Final grievance meeting

To conclude the investigation, the Investigating Officer will arrange a final meeting with the employee who raised the grievance. The purpose of this meeting is to enable the Investigating Officer to:

- outline the key points of the investigation i.e. who has been interviewed;
- clarify that all areas of the grievance agreed in the initial meeting have been covered;
- allow the employee the opportunity to highlight any areas they feel have not been sufficiently investigated; and
- allow the employee the opportunity to respond to any key issues that have come up during the investigation that were not covered at the initial meeting.

Responding to the grievance

Once the Investigating Officer feels they have all the necessary facts and evidence to enable them to make a decision, they will compile a report summarising their findings and recommendations. This report must be sent to the HR department for checking.

This information will be used by the Head of School/SMC to determine whether or not the grievance should be upheld. If the grievance is upheld, the Head of School / SMC will also be responsible for determining what actions, if any, need to be taken.

Outcomes

The list below is not exhaustive, but gives some examples of the possible outcomes of a grievance investigation.

Grievance not upheld

Where the Head of School / SMC has not found sufficient evidence to support any of the allegations made, the grievance will not be upheld and there will be no further action taken.

Grievance upheld (either in whole or in part)

Where the Head of School / SMC has found sufficient evidence to support all or some of the allegations made, there are a number of outcomes to consider in relation to each allegation:

- no further action;
- formal mediation - mediation may be suggested as an outcome as a way to resolve the grievance. This may have been entered into or suggested earlier in the process; however, in light of the findings of the investigation the Head of School / SMC may feel that it would help resolve the situation.
- action plan - the Head of School / SMC may recommend the production of an action plan aimed to address the behaviour which has caused the problem. The action plan may include objectives, target setting and training;

- alternative working arrangements – the Head of School / SMC should consider whether contact between the parties is likely to occur during the course of their job and the impact on the individuals and service delivery. Reasonable operational requirements may need to be considered if this is the case for example employees moving desks, change of line management or change of location where operationally feasible;
- disciplinary action - where it is clear that a conduct issue exists and there is a case to answer, disciplinary action will be considered.

Communicating the outcome

The Head of School / SMC may feel that it is appropriate to arrange a meeting with the employee who raised the grievance to talk through the findings and explain how they reached their decision.

The Head of School / SMC will provide a written response to the employee, summarising the outcome of the grievance investigation. The employee should also receive a copy of the investigation report.

Appeal

If the employee is dissatisfied with the decision of the Head of School / SMC, the employee has 10 school days from receipt of this decision to submit an appeal. The employee should appeal, in writing, setting out the grounds of appeal and send it to the Management or School Tribunal who will then facilitate the arrangement of conducting an appeal meeting.

Contact details

School HR Operations

The School HR Operations can be contacted on 022-4239 9976 or via e-mail hr@svkm.ac.in

School Managing Committee members (SMC)

Shri Mohan Awate , Addl CEO, SVKM; Ph : 022 -4239 9938 or via email mohan.awate@svkm.ac.in

Shri Jesus Lall, Chariman, Ph : 022 – 4239 9979 or via email
Jesus@universal.edu

Office bearer:

Shri Jayant Gandhi – Jt.Secretary – SVKM ; Ph ; 022-4239 9000 of via email at drjayantgandhi@gmail.com