



Education Trust

'Inspiring the individuals of today, for a better society tomorrow
"Aspire, Belong, Collaborate"

RET DISCIPLINARY POLICY

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Policy Statement

The Board of Trustees (the Board) of Riviera Education Trust (the Trust) expects all employees to maintain the highest standards of conduct. The disciplinary procedure is designed to support employees in achieving and maintaining those standards and to ensure that, where disciplinary action is necessary, it is applied fairly, reasonably, consistently and proportionately.

The aim will be to resolve issues quickly and at the lowest level of management. In many instances, good management practice will prevent recourse to formal disciplinary procedures.

The Trust has established disciplinary rules and procedures in accordance with relevant employment legislation, the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, and the principles of natural justice.

Natural justice requires that:

- When disciplinary procedures are put in motion the employee should know the reason for them;
- The employee should be given an opportunity to offer an explanation and to put their version and their facts forward before any decision is made;
- A disciplinary hearing should be a fair one and conducted free of bias.

All cases will be treated on an individual basis and the CEO / Headteacher and/or the Board of Trustees will deal with each case as appropriate, depending on the facts of the case, and with the overall objective of protecting the Trust, its pupils and its employees.

Introduction

Disciplinary matters can be complex and it is recommended that advice be sought from Human Resources before commencing any disciplinary process.



It is essential when managing disciplinary matters that a clear distinction is made between conduct and issues related to capability.

Employees have the right to be interviewed and must be given an adequate opportunity to make representations before any disciplinary decision is made. The employee should be advised of their right to be accompanied during the interview by a Trade Union / Professional Association or other representative and should be encouraged to exercise that right.

The Trust acknowledges that failure to establish and follow a fair procedure could result in a claim for unfair dismissal being brought to an Employment Tribunal. The Trust is responsible for ensuring that all employees have access to the Trust's conduct and capability policies. These will be provided on commencement of employment and again where disciplinary proceedings are being considered.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Riviera Education Trust. Agency workers, contractors, volunteers, trustees, governors and other individuals working with or on behalf of the Trust are expected to comply with the Trust's standards of conduct and behaviour. Any concerns relating to these individuals will be managed through the appropriate contractual, governance, safeguarding or relevant procedures, rather than under this disciplinary procedure. Where concerns relate to the conduct of a student teacher or trainee, the Trust will liaise with the relevant training provider or placement organisation to determine the appropriate course of action.

Equality Statement

Riviera Education Trust is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. This policy will be applied fairly, consistently and without discrimination. The Trust will ensure that no employee is treated less favourably on the grounds of any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments where required.

Confidentiality and information handling

The Trust will treat all disciplinary matters confidentially and expects all employees involved in the process to do the same. Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis where necessary to manage the matter, ensure a fair process, fulfil safeguarding responsibilities, or comply with legal or regulatory requirements. Records will be held securely in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.



Disciplinary Procedure: Conduct

This document has been adopted by the Board of Trustees, being the relevant body, as the procedure for the Riviera Education Trust. This procedure will cover **conduct**, not issues related to capability which should be handled under the Trust's Capability Procedure.

Types of Misconduct

Misconduct might be a series of minor offences or a single incident. Misconduct falls into two categories: general misconduct and gross misconduct. The nature and severity of the alleged offence will determine the form of disciplinary action invoked. Gross misconduct may result in either a final written warning or summary dismissal, which may be without notice or with pay in lieu of notice when the nature of the case is such that the Trust cannot allow the individual to continue at work.

General Misconduct may include:

- Poor timekeeping.
- Unjustifiable or unauthorised absence from work.
- Misuse or unauthorised use of Trust equipment, materials or property.
- Misuse of the Trust's internet and e-mail facilities.
- Failure to comply with a lawful and reasonable request from a Line Manager or Supervisor.
- Failure to comply with the Trust's Code of Conduct for Employees where applicable.
- Failure to comply with Trust / school policies and procedures.

Gross Misconduct – may include serious or repeated occasions of the above, or:

- Serious breach relating to the Safeguarding of Children.
- Theft or Malicious damage.
- Submission of false claims for financial reimbursement.
- Illegal use of Trust equipment.
- Threatening behaviour, assault of another employee or member of the public.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Racial misconduct.
- Harassment on grounds of Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual orientation, Age, Religion or Philosophical belief.
- Disregard for work rules, particularly relating to safe practices at work.
- Serious breach of the Trust's Acceptable Behaviour Policy.



- Serious breach of the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Serious breach of Health & Safety regulations or rules.
- Serious breach of UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Incapacity through drink or drugs.

All the above are examples only and are not intended as a complete list of conduct or behaviours which may be considered to be misconduct.

Delegated Authority to take Disciplinary Action

The Board of Trustees has delegated authority to the CEO / Headteacher to manage disciplinary matters, including issuing disciplinary warnings and dismissing employees, in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

Contact with Trade Union / Professional Association

If there is the possibility of disciplinary action being taken, the member of staff concerned should be encouraged to consult with their Trade Union / professional association. No disciplinary action will be taken against a member of staff who is a recognised Trade Union representative (including school representatives) until the circumstances of the case have been discussed with a full-time official of the union concerned. The CEO / Headteacher must seek advice from Human Resources in this situation. Acts to neutralise the situation, such as suspension, can however be taken.

Safeguarding issues

Where the disciplinary matter involves a safeguarding concern or allegation relating to a child, the Trust will manage the matter in accordance with its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and, where appropriate, in consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The Right to Representation

Employees have a statutory right to be accompanied by a representative at formal disciplinary and appeal hearings. There is no statutory right to be accompanied at informal discussions or investigatory meetings however this procedure permits a representative to attend investigatory meetings.



The representative may be a colleague, Trade Union representative or an official employed by a Trade Union. A Trade Union representative need not be an employee of the Trust but if they are not a fellow worker or an employee of the union, the Trust may insist on them being certified by their union as being trained to accompany an employee at a disciplinary or appeal hearing.

The representative will be able to address the hearing, put the employee's case, sum it up and respond on the employee's behalf to any views expressed at the hearing. The representative and employee are also able to confer during the hearing. However, the representative is not permitted to answer questions on behalf of the employee or address the hearing if the employee does not wish it, or prevent the employer from explaining their case.

Partners, spouses, friends or legal representatives have no statutory or contractual right to be able to accompany individuals. In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to the employee bringing a companion rather than a representative. This person would not be eligible to represent the employee at the meeting.

There is a right to legal representation at any disciplinary hearing, where the potential outcome of any disciplinary action could see the individual being barred from working with children. (Note the Trust is required to seek Human Resources guidance in such cases).

Individuals should confirm before the meeting whether or not they will be accompanied and which witnesses they would like to call.

Reasonable adjustments may be needed during the process if an employee, or their representative, has a disability, for example, the provision of a support worker or advocate with knowledge of the disability and its effects. Consideration should also be given to employees who have language or communication difficulties to ensure that they have fair representation throughout the process. This may include ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made in the case of a disabled employee, i.e. by ensuring that the meeting is conducted in a room allowing appropriate access, or that some form of translation service or alternative format is provided for employees where English is not their first language.

Suspension and Alternatives

The CEO / Headteacher may suspend a member of staff. In cases where the CEO / Headteacher is the subject of the disciplinary process the Chair of Trustees (or equivalent) can take a decision to suspend.



Suspension will be considered:

- Where this would allow a more objective examination of the circumstances.
- Where the alleged misconduct is sufficiently serious that dismissal is a potential outcome and suspension is considered necessary.
- Where a member of staff is the subject of a police investigation and the alleged offence is considered relevant to their duties.
- Where there is a reasonable ground to believe that it would seriously affect the interests of the Trust and/or the individual if they were to remain at work.

Suspension, whilst not a disciplinary act, is a very serious step and will therefore be considered carefully before being taken. Suspension is a neutral act and the employee will remain on full pay throughout the suspension. There may also be occasions when the employee is not suspended but is requested to stay away from all Trust sites on full pay. In response to such a request, the member of staff should be advised to seek advice from their Trade Union / Professional Association.

Where, due to exceptional circumstances, it is not practical to apply a suspension e.g. if a person authorised to impose a suspension is not available, the most senior member of staff present at the school will have the authority to request an employee to leave work immediately and stay away on full pay until further instructed by the CEO / Headteacher. A decision will be made as quickly as possible as to whether the employee is to be formally suspended or reinstated.

Where it is appropriate to consider alternatives to suspension that will also allow for an objective investigation, alternatives may include:

- A temporary transfer to alternative duties.
- Working from home or other location.
- A period of leave.

Suspension Interview

The employee should be interviewed at the time when consideration is being given to suspension and must be given an adequate opportunity to offer reasons why they should not be suspended. The interview should cover the allegations, notification that an investigation will be carried out and the likely timescale. The employee has the right to be represented, usually by the Union Representative, at this interview.



Where, following an interview, a suspension is imposed the following steps will be taken.

- A colleague from the Trust, who is unconnected with the issue, will be given responsibility for maintaining contact with the member of staff during the period of their suspension.
- The suspension will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days, including details of the reasons and the anticipated time scale before the employee can expect to be advised of any further action.
- The suspension will be reported as quickly as possible to the Board of Trustees. This should be no more than a summary of the facts to date – the name of the employee, the brief nature of the allegations without amplification and the next step in the process. Discussions beyond this will be avoided so as to prevent the possibility of prejudice and bias should the Trustees be required to be involved more formally in a disciplinary hearing or appeal.
- The length of the suspension (or any alternative action short of suspension that still allows for an investigation to take place) will be kept to a minimum to prevent the possibility of damaging the education of pupils and the wellbeing of the member of staff concerned. The length of the suspension (or other action) will therefore be closely monitored for its reasonableness.
- The details of the suspension will be kept confidential, however, in those exceptional circumstances where the media takes an interest in the matter, the CEO / Headteacher and / or Trustees will take appropriate advice before making any comments or issuing a statement. Wherever practical the member of staff will be given a copy of any proposed statement, prior to it being issued.

Where suspension is imposed it can only be removed by the Board of Trustees and / or the CEO / Headteacher.

Investigation

If the CEO / Headteacher is exercising delegated responsibility for dealing with staffing matters including dismissals they will normally commission an investigation which will be undertaken by the Deputy Headteacher or another senior member of staff.



Where it would be inappropriate for the CEO, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or other senior member of staff to conduct the investigation, the CEO / Headteacher should seek advice from Human Resources to discuss alternative arrangements.

Where, as part of an investigation, it is necessary to interview pupils, their parents/carers will be advised and their consent obtained. The member of staff's representative will have the opportunity to be present at the interview.

Please note: wherever possible pupils should be interviewed as part of the investigation to avoid the need for their attendance at a disciplinary hearing. Agreement should be sought amongst those present that the notes accurately reflect the pupil's statement.

The Investigating Officer will ensure that other people being interviewed are told the nature and purpose of the investigation, that written notes or statements will be taken and that these may be used at a disciplinary hearing. Following the interview, a copy of the notes will be emailed to the person who has been interviewed for review. They will be given the opportunity to confirm that the notes are an accurate record or to identify any amendments they consider necessary.

After the Investigation, a report will be produced by the investigating officer, containing all the statements taken and a recommendation given as to the next steps (i.e. that no further action is recommended or a disciplinary hearing is recommended.) The Investigating Officer's report on the outcome of the investigation will enable the person considering the allegation to decide whether or not to proceed with a formal hearing. The employee who is the subject of the investigation will be informed as soon as possible after the investigation is completed about the next steps – i.e. will the matter progress to a formal disciplinary hearing.

Where an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

Exploratory Interview

It should be remembered that the exploratory interview is not a disciplinary hearing within the procedure. The exploratory interview forms part of the investigation process (see Section 4 – 'Investigation' above).



An investigating officer will be appointed to hold an exploratory interview with the member of staff against whom the complaint/allegation has been made.

At the time of being asked to attend an exploratory interview, the member of staff must be informed in writing of the allegations being made and of their right to be represented at the interview. In addition, the member of staff must be issued with a copy of the Trust's current disciplinary procedure.

If the complaint or allegation is against the Headteacher, the CEO will be responsible for initiating the exploratory interview.

The purpose of the exploratory interview will be to: -

- Establish relevant information and determine whether further investigation is needed before a decision is taken about whether or not a formal hearing is necessary.
- Provide the member of staff with an opportunity to respond at an early stage.
- Explain what further steps, if any, are intended to be taken and the likely timescale.

Note – Although there is no statutory right to be accompanied at informal discussions or investigatory meetings this procedure permits a representative to attend investigatory meetings (see Section 2 – *Right to Representation – above*).

The Disciplinary Hearing

A disciplinary hearing is not a court of law and the tests to be applied are different, namely reasonable grounds for believing that a member of staff was responsible for the act or omission as alleged, and satisfaction that as much investigation into the matter was carried out as was reasonable.

During the hearing, either side will be entitled to request an adjournment for consultation. Any reasonable request should be allowed. Witnesses will attend only that part of the hearing where they are required to give evidence and answer questions.

If the member of staff is to be dismissed, those responsible for this decision should be satisfied that dismissal is a reasonable course of action to take.



In cases where a disciplinary hearing or appeal may result in a referral that could affect an employee's ability to work with children, Human Resources must be contacted for advice regarding the appropriate procedure, including any entitlement to legal representation.

A written record of the proceedings will be kept and retained for the purposes of any subsequent appeal or Employment Tribunal proceedings. Where a hearing is conducted by a Trustee Disciplinary Committee, the committee minutes will record only the decision reached and will be treated as confidential. Individuals should be identified by their initials in both the hearing record and committee minutes.

The member of staff will receive at least 5 working days' written notice of the disciplinary hearing. By mutual agreement, this timescale may be shortened where appropriate. The letter will set out the following:

- The date, time and place of the hearing, who will be in attendance, the nature of the complaint being made, and copies of any supporting information, including any witness statements taken as part of an investigation.
- The potential consequences of any disciplinary action (i.e. when the allegations are very serious, that dismissal may be an outcome).
- Notification of the right to have a representative present at the hearing.
- Additional information should normally be submitted to the Disciplining Officer at least two working days before the hearing. In exceptional circumstances, late submissions may be accepted where the Disciplining Officer has been notified in advance and is satisfied there is a reasonable explanation.
- Where the employee wishes to call witnesses, they should notify the Trust in sufficient time to enable those witnesses to attend, taking account of working patterns.

Format of the Disciplinary Hearing

- The CEO / Headteacher or Chairperson of the Hearing will introduce the parties and give brief details of the allegations made.
- The Investigating Officer will then be asked to set out the allegations and to present the investigation report. Witnesses may then be called to give evidence in the presence of the member of staff and their representative. The member of staff and their representative will have the opportunity to put questions to the Investigating Officer and/or witnesses.



- The member of staff and their representative will be invited to put their case, calling witnesses as necessary. The Investigating Officer will have the opportunity to ask questions of the member of staff, their representative and/or witnesses.
- The CEO / Headteacher / Trustees hearing the allegations will have the opportunity to ask questions of both parties and their witnesses throughout the hearing.
- Where applicable, Human Resources may wish to ask questions and offer advice as necessary.
- Both parties will have the opportunity to summarise their cases, provided new information is not introduced, with the member of staff or their representative making the final submission.
- Those who are not directly responsible for making a decision regarding the outcome of the hearing, other than Human Resources will withdraw to enable a decision to be reached (see Section 7 below). If further clarification is required on any point, all the parties will be recalled.
- Having considered the matter and ensured that the decision reached is a reasonable response to the circumstances, the CEO, Headteacher or Chairperson will announce the decision orally to both parties. Where the Headteacher or Trustees need further time to consider the outcome, they can adjourn the decision but must notify the member of staff within 2 working days.
- The decision will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days. Where formal disciplinary action is taken, the member of staff will be advised of the grounds of the action taken and, where appropriate, how long any warning will remain on file and the consequences of any recurrence together with details of any remedial action required. The letter will also contain details of their right of appeal.

The Formal Disciplinary Decision

Following a Disciplinary hearing there must be a decision on what action, if any, should be taken. It must be appropriate to the circumstances of the case and the seriousness of the "offence".

The following courses of action are available:

- to take no action;



- **a First written warning** i.e. where there has been a repeated minor breach in conduct or a first but more serious breach of discipline. The employee should be advised that a failure to improve or a repetition of the misconduct may result in further disciplinary action; there is a right to appeal a formal written warning.
- **a Final written warning** i.e. where there has been an insufficient response to previous warnings and conduct is still unsatisfactory or in the case of a first but serious breach of discipline. This warning must state that failure to improve or any repetition may result in dismissal; there is a right to appeal against a final written warning.
- **Dismissal** with or without notice.

Dismissal Due to Gross Misconduct

The effective date of termination for an employee who is summarily dismissed (without notice) for gross misconduct is the date that the employee is made aware of the termination.

Employees on NJC (Green Book) terms and conditions who are summarily dismissed for gross misconduct will be paid for any accrued but untaken statutory annual leave only. Payment will not be made in respect of any additional contractual annual leave entitlement.

Appeal

An appeal is not a re-hearing of the case but an opportunity for the appellant to make representations to someone who was not involved in the original decision. Appeals will be conducted by the Appeals Committee, who will be responsible for ensuring that:

- An adequate investigation took place;
- The member of staff was given a chance to make representation and their response was given fair consideration against the allegations being made;
- Having regard to all the circumstances the decision was reasonable;

It is open to the Appeals Committee to decide:



- To adjourn, pending reconsideration by the CEO / Headteacher / First Committee where a significant amount of fresh evidence is brought;
- To uphold the appeal;
- To determine that some other lesser penalty should apply;
- To reject the appeal.

The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final within the procedures of the Trust and there will be no further right of appeal.

The member of staff has the right to appeal against a decision to issue a first written warning, to issue a final written warning or notice of dismissal.

A member of staff wishing to exercise their right of appeal must notify the Chair of Trustees in writing within 10 working days of receiving written confirmation of the disciplinary decision. The grounds on which the appeal will be made, and any supporting information, should be sent at that time, or as soon as possible, and in any case before the date of the appeal hearing.

An Appeals Committee of Trustees will be convened to hear the appeal. *Note: The appeal will be to a Committee of the Trust Board consisting of trustees who have not taken part in the original decision. The Appeals Committee must contain at least an equivalent number of Trustees to the First Committee (Disciplinary Committee), none of whom were party to the original decision.*

The member of staff will be given at least 5 working days' written notice of the appeal hearing and will be provided with copies of any additional documents to be considered by the Appeals Committee, e.g. the notes of the original hearing. Where additional documents are not available when the notice of hearing is issued, they will be provided as soon as reasonably practicable and, wherever possible, before the hearing.

Format of the Appeal Hearing

The format of the appeal will be as follows:

- The CEO / Headteacher / Trustee Committee's representative will put the case in the presence of the Employee and/or their representative and may call witnesses.



- The Employee and / or their representative will have the opportunity to ask questions of the CEO / Headteacher / Trustee Committee's representative on the evidence given by them or by any witness called.
- The Appeals Committee may ask questions of the CEO / Headteacher / Trustees Committee's representative and witnesses.
- The Employee and / or representative will put their case in the presence of the CEO / Headteacher / Trustees Committee's representative and may call witnesses.
- CEO / Headteacher / Trustees Committee's representative will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Employee and any witnesses.
- The Appeals Committee may ask questions of the Employee and any witnesses.
- The Human Resources representative (where present) may ask questions and offer advice as necessary.
- CEO / Headteacher / Trustees Committee's representative will have an opportunity to sum up their case but will not be allowed to introduce any new evidence.
- The Employee and / or representative will have an opportunity to sum up their case but will not be allowed to introduce any new evidence.
- Those who are not part of the Committee, other than the Human Resources representative will withdraw to enable the Committee to reach a decision. If further clarification is required on any point, all the parties will be recalled.
- Having considered the matter, the Appeals Committee Chairperson will announce the decision orally to both parties.

Appeal Decision

The decision will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days. If the decision is anything other than to uphold the appeal, the letter will need to clarify the grounds for the action taken, how long the warning will remain on file, the consequences of any reoccurrence and, where appropriate, any



remedial action required. If the appeal is upheld, the outcome and any resulting action will be confirmed in writing.



DETAILS OF AMENDMENTS

June 2019

- Updated to include Shiphay Learning Academy

June 2020

- Reviewed without change

May 2021

- Reviewed without change.

May 2022

- Reviewed without change.

Feb 2024

- Minor Formatting Changes
- Roles amended to reflect updated roles within the Trust
- Updated to gender-neutral pronouns

June 2025

- Reviewed without change.

August 2026

- Updated the policy introduction and policy statement for clarity and align with current employment law and the ACAS Code of Practice.
- Added Scope, Equality Statement, and Confidentiality sections.
- Clarified delegated authority for disciplinary matters in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.
- Updated safeguarding provisions to reflect current statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Updated references to UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Clarified suspension provisions, including the consideration of alternatives to suspension.
- Updated investigation procedures, including the handling and review of interview notes.
- Removed outdated reference to "Confidential Part II arrangements" and clarified the requirements for confidential Trustee Committee minutes and record keeping.
- Updated disciplinary and appeal timescales, including notice periods and arrangements for expedited hearings by mutual agreement.
- Clarified the process for legal representation in appropriate safeguarding cases.
- Updated terminology throughout the policy for consistency, including replacing "Head of School" with "Headteacher" and "School" with "Trust".



- General drafting amendments to improve clarity, consistency, accessibility and alignment with current Trust practice.

