



# Grievance & Disciplinary Policy

## 2025 - 2026

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**Date Approved:** August 2022  
**Review Date:** August 2025  
**Next Review Date:** August 2026

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## Introduction

REACH Learning Provision believes that an open and honest dialogue between staff and managers is key to maintaining clear expectations, positive working relationships, and effective performance. Most issues can and should be resolved informally through discussion and constructive feedback.

However, where informal resolution is not possible, REACH has formal **disciplinary** and **grievance** procedures in place to ensure issues are managed fairly, consistently, and lawfully. This policy is guided by the **ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (2015)** and relevant employment law. It applies to all REACH employees who have passed their probationary period.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out how REACH will address concerns relating to conduct, performance, and grievances.
- Ensure all matters are handled fairly, consistently, and in line with legal obligations.
- Distinguish between informal resolution and formal procedures.
- Protect the rights of employees, including the right to representation and appeal.
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are made for staff with disabilities or specific needs.

## Scope

This policy applies to all employees of REACH Learning Provision. It does not apply to:

- Freelancers, contractors, or agency staff (who should raise concerns with their REACH contact).
- Staff within their probationary period, who are managed under separate probationary procedures.

For performance issues and alleged misconduct, the procedure operates three levels of warnings described below, as well as dismissal:

- Initial verbal warning
- Written warning
- Final written warning

## Guiding Principles

1. Issues should be raised and addressed promptly.
2. Informal resolution will always be considered first where appropriate.
3. Employees will have the right to state their case before decisions are made.
4. No decision will be made without a fair investigation.
5. Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.
6. Suspension (in disciplinary cases) is a neutral act, not a sanction.
7. Outcomes will be documented, and employees have the right to appeal.
8. Confidentiality will be maintained in line with REACH's **Data Protection Policy**.
9. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure employees with disabilities or additional needs can fully participate in disciplinary or grievance procedures.

## Disciplinary Procedure

### Informal Resolution

- SLT should address minor issues promptly through discussion, feedback, and support.
- Additional training or coaching may be provided where appropriate.

### Formal Stages

Where issues cannot be resolved informally, the following formal stages apply:

- **Verbal Warning** – valid for up to 6 months.
- **Written Warning** – valid for up to 12 months.
- **Final Written Warning** – valid for up to 18 months.
- **Dismissal** – with notice, or without notice in cases of gross misconduct.

Progression through stages is not automatic; REACH may impose the sanction most appropriate to the circumstances.

### Misconduct

Examples (not exhaustive):

- Breach of safeguarding policy
- Persistent lateness or absenteeism
- Carelessness, negligence, or refusal to follow reasonable instructions
- Misuse of REACH IT systems
- Behaviour that brings REACH into disrepute

## Gross Misconduct

Examples (not exhaustive):

- Theft, fraud, or deliberate falsification of records
- Harassment, bullying, or assault
- Insubordination
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at work
- Serious breaches of health and safety
- Breach of confidentiality
- Serious misuse of IT systems
- Criminal convictions affecting suitability for role

## Investigation and Suspension

- All allegations will be investigated before decisions are made.
- Employees may be suspended on full pay during investigations. Suspension is a neutral act.

## Disciplinary Hearing

- The employee will receive written notice of the allegations, evidence, and possible outcomes.
- The employee has the right to be accompanied.
- A hearing will be held where the employee can present their case.
- A written outcome will be provided within **5 working days**.

## Appeals

- Employees have the right to appeal disciplinary outcomes within **7 working days**.
- Appeals will be heard by a senior manager not previously involved in the case.

## Grievance Procedure

### What is a Grievance?

A grievance is any concern, problem, or complaint raised by an employee about their work, working environment, or working relationships.

Examples include:

- Dissatisfaction with management decisions or treatment
- Concerns about pay, working conditions, or practices
- Issues relating to health and safety
- Breakdown of working relationships

## Informal Resolution

- Employees are encouraged to raise grievances informally with their manager in the first instance.
- Managers should work with the employee to resolve concerns promptly.
- Mediation may be offered at any stage.

## Formal Grievances

Where informal resolution is not possible:

1. The employee should submit their grievance in writing, including details, evidence, and desired outcome.
2. A hearing manager will be appointed who has not previously been involved in the case.
3. A formal grievance hearing will be held within **10 working days** of receiving the complaint.
4. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.
5. A written outcome will normally be provided within **5 working days** of the hearing.

## Appeals

- Employees may appeal grievance outcomes within **7 working days**.
- Appeals will be heard by a senior manager, Head of Provision, or nominated trustee not previously involved.

## Confidentiality and Records

- All disciplinary and grievance matters will be treated confidentially.
- Information will only be shared with those directly involved.
- Records will be stored securely in line with the **Data Protection Policy**.
- Expired warnings will be removed from personnel files.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- **Head of Provision** – ensures standards of conduct and performance are met; leads on final warnings, dismissals, and appeals.
- **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** – investigate and manage grievances and disciplinary cases fairly.
- **Employees** – raise concerns promptly and honestly, and engage constructively in processes.
- **HR/Business Manager** – provides advice and ensures correct procedures are followed.

## Monitoring & Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes.
- REACH will ensure compliance with the ACAS Code and good employment practice.

## Appendix A – Disciplinary Sanctions

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Typical Validity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Verbal Warning	6 months	Minor misconduct/performance issues
Written Warning	12 months	Repeated or more serious issues
Final Written Warning	18 months	Serious misconduct or failure to improve
Dismissal	N/A	For gross misconduct or persistent issues

Appendix B – Grievance Form (Template)

Name:

Position:

Manager:

Nature of grievance:

Details (include dates, people, evidence):

Steps taken so far to resolve:

Outcome sought:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_