

## Grievance Policy

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### 1. Purpose & scope

- a. This policy applies to all employees within Kaplan International Pathways.
- b. This Grievance Policy is designed to address serious grievances and complaints an employee may have (which could not be successfully resolved informally) regarding their treatment by the company, by a manager, by a colleague or by an associated person such as a contractor, student or customer.
- c. Where a grievance relates to bullying or harassment, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Bullying & Harassment Policy.
- d. Complaints that employees may have about any disciplinary action taken against them should be raised as a relevant issue in the course of those proceedings (for example during the disciplinary hearing or appeal stage).
- e. Grievances raised while you are subject to disciplinary proceedings, that appear to be unrelated to those proceedings, will usually be dealt with independently and in parallel with the disciplinary process
- f. Kaplan is committed to giving all genuine grievances and complaints due consideration, however, we reserve the right not to pursue grievances that are deemed by an HR Director or Head of HR to be frivolous or vexatious or which

merely repeat complaints already made.

## **2. Informal resolution**

- a. In many circumstances, it may be possible to successfully resolve grievances or complaints informally and we encourage all parties to seek to do this in the first instance.
- b. For example, where an employee is unhappy about the treatment they have received or about any aspect of their work, we encourage them to raise it informally with their line manager. If the grievance or complaint is about the line manager, they should raise this with an alternative or more senior manager.
- c. Where attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work or where informal resolution is not suitable, it may be appropriate for an employee to raise a formal grievance under this procedure.

## **3. Raising a formal grievance/complaint**

- a. The first stage of the grievance procedure is for you to put your grievance in writing. This written statement will form the basis of the subsequent hearing and any investigations, so it is important that you set out clearly the nature of your grievance clarifying information (such as dates of events, witnesses, email evidence) and indicate the resolution that you are seeking. If your grievance is unclear, you may be asked to clarify your grievance before any meeting takes place.
- b. Your grievance should be headed "Formal grievance" and sent to your line manager. If your grievance relates to the way in which you believe your line manager is treating you, the grievance may be sent to a more senior manager or an HR Advisor/HR Manager.
- c. Upon receipt of the formal grievance, the manager receiving the grievance, with guidance from HR, will carry out an initial assessment of the substance of the issues raised to determine the most appropriate course of action. Further attempts may be made to resolve the matter informally, depending on the nature of your grievance. However, if you are not satisfied, you may request that the matter proceeds to a full grievance hearing.

#### **4. Investigation**

- a. It may be necessary to carry out investigations of any allegations made by you before and/or after a grievance hearing. Any investigation will be conducted in line with the Company's Investigation Policy.
- b. This will usually be conducted by the same manager who will hear your grievance. The relevant manager will write to you confirming that they are conducting the investigation and the timescale for completion.
- c. The level of investigation and time this will take will vary depending on the nature of your grievance.
- d. If any evidence is gathered in advance of the hearing, relevant information will be shared with you ahead of the hearing for you to consider your response. In certain circumstances, the evidence given by individuals may have to remain confidential. Where confidentiality is necessary, this will be explained to you and an appropriate summary of the evidence gathered will be given to you.

#### **5. The grievance hearing**

- a. The hearing will be held as soon as is reasonably practicable and, subject to any need to carry out prior investigations.
- b. It will be conducted by your line manager or, if more appropriate given the nature of the grievance, by an alternative manager or in certain circumstances a member of Human Resources.
- c. You should ensure that you attend the meeting at the specified time. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform your line manager as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the hearing may take place in your absence.
- d. At the meeting, you will be asked to explain the nature of your grievance and what action you feel should be taken to resolve the matter.
- e. While you will be given every opportunity to explain your case fully, you should confine your explanation to matters that are directly relevant to your grievance. Focusing on irrelevant issues or incidents that took place long before the matters in hand is not helpful and can hinder the effective handling of your grievance. The manager conducting the hearing will intervene if they think that the discussion is straying too far from the key issue. The manager may also

intervene to ensure that the meeting can be completed within a reasonable timeframe, depending on the nature and complexity of your grievance.

- f. Following the meeting, you will be informed in writing of the outcome as soon as is reasonably practicable, subject to any need to carry out any further investigations, and told of any action that the company proposes to take as a result of your grievance. You may discuss this outcome informally with either your line manager, the manager who conducted the grievance hearing or a member of the HR Team.
- g. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may make a formal appeal.

## **6. Appeal**

- a. Your appeal should be made in writing to a member of the HR Team or the appeal manager identified in the grievance outcome, within 7 calendar days of receipt of the written grievance outcome.
- b. You should clearly state the grounds of your appeal, i.e. the basis on which you say that the result of the grievance was wrong or that the action taken as a result was inappropriate. This should be done within one week of the written notification of the outcome of the grievance.
- c. An appeal meeting will be arranged to take place and you should ensure that you attend the meeting at the specified time.
- d. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform the manager hearing the appeal of this as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the hearing may take place in your absence.
- e. The appeal hearing will be conducted by a manager or a member of the HR Team who is senior enough to overturn the original decision should they deem it necessary.
- f. They will consider the grounds that you have put forward and assess whether or not the conclusion reached in the original grievance hearing was appropriate.
- g. The appeal is not a rehearing of the original grievance, but rather a consideration of the specific areas with which you are dissatisfied in relation to the original grievance. The manager conducting the appeal may therefore

confine discussion to those specific areas rather than reconsider the whole matter afresh.

- h. Following the appeal meeting, you will be informed in writing of the outcome as soon as is reasonably practicable, subject to any need to carry out any further investigations.
- i. The outcome of this meeting will be final.

## **7. The right to be accompanied**

- a. You have the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or trade union official at any grievance meeting or subsequent appeal. The trade union official need not be an employee of the company, but if they are not a fellow worker or an employee of their union, they must present sufficient evidence of being certified by the union as being experienced or trained in accompanying employees at grievance hearings.
- b. The choice of companion is a matter for you, but the company reserves the right to refuse to accept a companion whose presence would undermine the grievance process. Please note that individual workers are not obliged to agree to accompany you. Companions will be given appropriate paid time off to allow them to accompany colleagues at a grievance hearing or appeal hearing.
- c. At any hearing or appeal hearing, your chosen companion will be allowed to address the meeting, respond on your behalf to any view expressed in the hearing, and sum up the case on your behalf. However, both the hearing and appeal hearing are essentially meetings between the employer and you, so any questions put directly to you should be dealt with by you and not your companion.
- d. Where the chosen companion is unavailable on the day scheduled for the hearing or appeal hearing, the hearing will be rescheduled, provided that you can propose an alternative time within five working days of the scheduled date.

## **8. Recording of meetings**

- a. Save where agreed in advance as a reasonable adjustment, the manager, the employee, or any person acting on their behalf, is not permitted to record

electronically by any means, including the use of transcribing software, any meeting held by the Company as part of the grievance process. Instead, written notes will be taken and a final version made available upon request. Additionally, the employee or any person acting on their behalf may wish to take their own set of notes.

- b. Any covert recording of meetings may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## **9. Remote proceedings**

- a. Reflecting the geographical spread and/or hybrid nature of our workforce, meetings under this procedure may be held remotely.
- b. Remote proceedings will usually be held via video call and all parties will be expected to have their camera turned on, wherever possible.
- c. All parties should ensure that they are in a private space, for reasons of confidentiality and to avoid disruption, and that they have a good internet connection.

## **10. Conduct throughout the grievance procedure**

- a. We recognise that a formal grievance procedure can be a stressful and upsetting experience for all parties involved. Everyone involved in the process is entitled to be treated calmly and with respect. We will not tolerate abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone taking part in or conducting grievance procedures and will treat any such behaviour as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

## **11. Policy review & contacts**

- a. If you have any questions about this policy, your line manager or the HR team can help.
- b. Our policies are reviewed and (if required) updated at least every two years in line with legal obligations, business objectives, and operational needs. We will notify staff of some key changes, but it is not practical to notify of every change that occurs so it is everyone's responsibility to keep themselves up to date with the current versions of policies as made available via our intranet. Please revisit employment policies at regular intervals, and refer to specific relevant policies when the need arises.