

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Purpose and Scope

Employees who have a grievance are likely to be de-motivated and unhappy at work. QRS wishes to encourage openness and fairness in dealing with all employee grievances and encourage an environment in which employees feel comfortable in voicing a grievance. The purpose of this Grievance Policy is to enable any employee of QRS to raise a grievance or complaint arising out of their employment with QRS and to have it dealt with speedily and fairly. All employees, irrespective of their job or grade, may use this policy in good faith, freely and without prejudice to their position at the Company.

This policy does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

This policy should not be used if you are dissatisfied about any disciplinary action taken against you, rather you should exercise your right of appeal under the disciplinary policy.

QRS has a separate Whistleblowing Policy which should be used to report any concerns which you may have about illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice. However, where you are directly affected by the matter in question, or where you feel you have been victimised for an act of whistleblowing, you may raise the matter under this Grievance Policy.

We also have a separate Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy that may be useful if you feel that you have been bullied, harassed, or wish to report an incident of bullying or harassment involving other people.

This policy is not contractual and may be changed by QRS at any time.

If you have difficulty at any stage of the Grievance Policy because of a disability you should discuss the situation with your line manager as soon as possible.

You will be expected to work your standard contractual hours during the course of the investigation and until the matter is resolved.

Principles

All genuine grievances will be taken seriously by QRS.

All grievances will be fully investigated and responded to promptly.

The Policy

Informal process

You are encouraged to raise minor concerns on an informal basis with your line manager who in most cases will be best placed to deal with your grievance. If you feel unable to speak to your line manager, for example, because your concerns relate to them specifically, then you should speak informally to a more senior manager or an alternative director.

Formal process

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of an informal consultation with your line manager, or you consider that the matter is too serious to be addressed in an informal manner, the formal policy should be used. Under the formal policy, you should send a letter or email to your line manager (unless the grievance concerns your line manager, in which case your written grievance should be submitted to a director). Your letter or email should set out what is concerning you and the grounds for the grievance in as much detail as possible including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved. In some situations, we may ask you to provide further information.

You will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss your grievance. You must take all reasonable steps to attend the grievance meeting. If you do not attend for a legitimate reason, the meeting will be postponed once. If you do not attend without a reasonable explanation, QRS will conclude that you no longer wish to proceed with your grievance.

You will usually be given three working days' notice of the date and time of the grievance meeting.

You will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague at the grievance meeting. If you wish to exercise this right, you should tell your line manager in advance who you have chosen as a companion. Acting as a companion is voluntary and your colleagues are under no obligation to do so. If they agree to do so they will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion. At the grievance meeting, your companion may not answer questions on your behalf, but may present your case, sum up and respond on your behalf to views expressed at the grievance meeting. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during the hearing. If your chosen companion is not available, the grievance meeting will be postponed to a more mutually convenient time within the next five working days.

Our aim is to deal with grievances sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with a grievance. You, and anyone accompanying you (including witnesses), must not make electronic recordings of any meetings conducted under this policy.

QRS will arrange for notes of the grievance meeting to be taken usually by someone who is not involved in the case. You will usually be given a copy of the Company's notes of the meeting. You, or your companion, are entitled to take your own notes.

Following the grievance meeting, your line manager/a Director will conduct such investigation as is reasonable in all the circumstances. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. You must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us. Following such investigation, your line manager will write to you to tell you of his or her response to your grievance.

We will attempt to respond to your grievance within a period of 14 working days from receipt of your written grievance, but a longer period may be appropriate in some cases. You will be notified of your right of appeal.

Appeal policy

If you are dissatisfied with the finding, you can appeal to a Company Director who has not been involved in responding to your grievance. You should submit any appeal in writing within 5 working days of receiving the decision into your grievance.

We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within one week of receiving your written appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by two directors who have not previously been involved in the case (although they may ask anyone previously involved to be present). You have a right to bring a companion to the appeal meeting in the same way as to the grievance meeting as explained above.

As per the grievance meeting, you must take all reasonable steps to attend the appeal meeting and if you do not do so we will conclude that you no longer wish to pursue your appeal.

You will be notified of the outcome of the appeal in writing. The appeal decision is final and the Company's grievance policy is exhausted at this stage.

These policies supplement your terms of employment but are not of contractual effect. Their purpose is to explain the Company's current policies and procedures but they may be subject to change without notice if changes are considered appropriate by the Company or if there are changes in relevant legislation.