

Grievance Policy & Procedure

Policy number	3.4	Version	1
Created by	HR & Operations Manager	Created on	26 August 2024
Responsible person	HR & Operations Manager	Scheduled review date	25 August 2025

Purpose

The purpose and procedures outlined in this Grievance Policy aim to achieve consistent treatment in the handling of grievances whereby a NECOM staff member/s are involved. This may also include where a complaint has been made by a parent or student, relating to a NECOM staff member.

This policy applies to all NECOM staff members, and may be read in conjunction with the NECOM Bullying and Harassment policy, depending on the specific issue.

Details

NECOM recognises that an employee may not perform to the best of their ability if they feel they are being treated unfairly or are feeling aggrieved. Accordingly, NECOM will endeavour to provide a fair working environment, by aiming to ensure that employees have access to processes for the resolution of genuine grievances, related to the workplace. As such, NECOM will use its reasonable endeavours to:

- encourage staff to come forward with personal grievances
- deal with grievances in a supportive way, without victimisation or intimidation of any person connected with the grievance
- encourage fairness, impartiality and the resolution of grievances, as reasonably promptly and as close as possible to the source of the grievance
- seek to prevent and resolve grievances

Where a grievance arises, NECOM will endeavour, if appropriate, to resolve the dispute in line with the following procedure. The below procedure is intended as a guide only. In every case, NECOM will determine the actual procedure to be adopted at its discretion and in consideration of the circumstances, as a whole. As such, NECOM may skip certain steps where this is appropriate.

Where a grievance arises that involves the CEO being the subject of the grievance, NECOM's Chairman of the Board will endeavour, if appropriate, to resolve the dispute, assisted by the HR & Operations Manager.

Procedure

Attempt to Resolve the Grievance Yourself

If the employee feels comfortable in doing so, they should attempt to address the issue directly with the person(s) involved in the grievance. The staff member may discover that the other person was not aware of their grievance and the matter may be able to be resolved directly.

Report the Grievance to Management

If the staff member does not feel comfortable talking to the person(s) involved, or they have attempted to and it was ineffective in resolving the grievance, or if there is no other person involved in the grievance, the staff member should report the grievance to the HR & Operations Manager. After reporting a grievance, the HR & Operations Manager will use reasonable endeavours to conduct an initial meeting with the staff member to:

- obtain information about the grievance and what they consider will resolve it
- explain how the grievance procedure works

- once the staff member has reported the matter to the HR & Operations Manager, that person may commence one of the procedures outlined below, that is regarded as suitable for dealing with the grievance

Informal Procedure

The informal procedure involves a range of informal actions to resolve the grievance. Such actions will depend on the individual circumstances of the grievance. Possible actions include, but are not limited to:

- the HR & Operations Manager discussing the issue with the person against whom the complaint is made; and/or
- the HR & Operations Manager facilitating a meeting between the parties in an attempt to resolve the issue and move forward

Many grievances are able to be resolved through the informal procedure. However, in circumstances where the HR & Operations Manager considers the informal procedure is not appropriate, and the grievance is sufficiently serious, the grievance may be escalated to the formal procedure.

Formal Procedure

If the grievance is not able to be resolved through the informal procedure or the informal procedure is not appropriate, the formal procedure may commence. The formal procedure involves a formal investigation of the grievance and a decision about appropriate actions and outcomes. The investigation generally involves the collection of information about the grievance and the determination of a finding, based on the available information

Once a finding is made, the HR & Operations Manager will make recommendations about the grievance.

Other Procedural issues

Work will continue as normal while a grievance is being dealt with under this policy. All persons affected by the grievance are expected to cooperate with NECOM, to ensure the efficient and fair resolution of the grievance. Disciplinary action may be taken against any person who victimises or retaliates against a person who has lodged or is involved in a grievance issue, under this policy. Such action may include termination of employment. The HR & Operations Manager will endeavour to maintain confidentiality, as far as possible. However, it may be necessary to speak with other staff members or workplace participants in order to determine what happened so as to afford fairness to those against whom the complaint has been made, and to resolve the grievance. All staff members and workplace participants involved in the grievance must also maintain confidentiality, including the staff member who lodges the complaint. The complainant may discuss the grievance with a designated support person or representative (who is not an employee employed or engaged by NECOM). However, the support person or representative must also maintain confidentiality. If a person breaches confidentiality they may be subject to disciplinary action. Such action may include termination of employment. Where considered appropriate by NECOM, agreed resolutions of grievances arising from the informal procedure may be recorded and signed by all parties.

Possible outcomes

NECOM will in its sole discretion determine whether any outcomes (disciplinary or otherwise) are appropriate. The outcome will depend on the nature of the grievance and the procedure followed to address the grievance. Where an investigation results in a finding that a person has engaged in conduct in breach of a NECOM policy, that person may be disciplined. The type and severity of disciplinary action will depend on the nature of the grievance and other relevant factors. Where the investigation results in a finding that the person complained against has engaged in serious misconduct, this may result in instant dismissal. Any disciplinary action is a confidential matter between the affected person(s) and NECOM. NECOM may take a range of other non-disciplinary outcomes to resolve a grievance. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- training, to assist in addressing the problems underpinning the grievance

- monitoring, to ensure that there are no further problems
- implementing a new policy
- requirement for an apology or an undertaking that certain behaviour stop
- change in work arrangements

Any further information relating to the Policy or Procedure should be directed to the HR & Operations Manager.

Policy version and revision information

Policy Authorised by: GMoin

Title: Chairman of the Board