

Peer to Peer Resolution Procedure for Staff Employed by Education and Training Boards (ETBs)

Procedure adopted by Audit & Risk Committee on
23 March 2023





& CDETB Craft Unions (e.g. TEEU, INPDU, UCATT and BATU)

**PROCEDURE TO RESOLVE PEER TO PEER
EMPLOYEE RELATIONS ISSUES
(PEER TO PEER RESOLUTION PROCEDURE)
FOR STAFF EMPLOYED BY
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARDS (ETBs)**

INTRODUCTION

There is a statutory obligation on employers to provide all new employees with written details of collective agreements within 2 months of taking up employment. The Peer-to-Peer Procedure is a collective agreement and notification of same will issue during the induction/onboarding process.

POLICY

This procedure is for the resolution of peer-to-peer issues between employees in the ETB.

It is the policy of Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board to:

- Encourage employees at all levels to use appropriate and approved channels of communications and to develop and maintain professionally respectful working relationships that will prevent or minimise the incidence of issues between employees.
- Recognise that engaged and professional discussion can involve disagreement and strong difference of view and that this is the part of a healthy working environment
- Endeavour to foster a working environment and working relationships in which the informal resolution of differences is the norm.
- Provide effective and fair facilities by which staff can seek resolution of issues.
- Resolve issues fairly at the earliest stage when an issue arises.
- Recognise that compromise is a necessary part of the resolution where opinions differ.

Proposals for changes in working conditions or work practices affecting the terms of employment of the staff (which are comprehended by the Grievance Procedure) are not comprehended by this policy.

PRINCIPLES

The agreed procedure provides a means for the resolution of issues between employees in the interests of avoiding conflict and maintaining professional relationships. Employees engaging in this procedure are expected to do so in good faith and the views and opinions of all parties will be respected.

This procedure does not apply to:

- Terms and conditions of employment;
- Concerns around a work-related instruction given by a colleague in a more senior position.

Stage 1

For the purpose of this procedure, an employee who raises a matter shall be termed party A and the other party shall be termed party B. In the first instance, party A should raise the matter, in a clear and respectful fashion, with party B.

The following steps should be taken:

- Party A should identify the issue and raise matters at the earliest opportunity directly and

respectfully with party B;

- Party B should make every effort to engage in good faith;
- The onus is on both parties to engage professionally, courteously and constructively to sort out matters and, if appropriate, compromise in a manner that is conducive to a resolution of the matter;
- Both parties should agree realistic time frames for any resolution sought;
- Both parties may agree a note of the outcome of the discussions should they so wish.

Stage 2

Where it has not been possible to resolve matters informally and directly between the parties, the Line Manager/Principal/Co-ordinator should be consulted by both parties as follows:

- As part of effective leadership, the Line Manager/Principal/Co-ordinator has a role in promoting positive working relations and accordingly should hear the parties respectfully and seek to help them resolve the issue;
- The Line Manager/Principal/Co-ordinator should act in a fair and impartial manner;
- The onus is on both parties, facilitated by the Line Manager/Principal/Co-ordinator, to engage constructively to seek to resolve matters and it is expected that the parties would be prepared to compromise with a view to resolving matters at the earliest opportunity;
- The Line Manager/Principal/Co-ordinator may, if necessary, exercise judgement, suggest approaches and, where appropriate, make decisions which he/she considers necessary to resolve matters;
- The outcome of the discussions should be recorded by the Line Manager/Principal/Co-ordinator and should be provided to the parties. The record of the outcome should be factual and objective.

Please note that where resolution is not achieved at Stages 1 or 2, it is open to the parties to either move to stage 3 or to go directly to stage 4.

Stage 3

Where resolution has not been achieved at either stage 1 or stage 2, the parties and/or the Line Manager/Principal/Co-ordinator may request the ETB to appoint a mediator. It must be noted that for mediation to take place, each party must agree to engage in mediation in good faith. The mediator shall set out the terms for the process of engagement to the parties. On conclusion, the mediator shall state and inform the employer whether or not resolution has been achieved by the parties

Stage 4

Where it has not been possible to agree an approach for resolution at previous stages, the matter should be referred by the parties to the ETB for the attention of the Chief Executive (CE), who may delegate the matter to a nominee who shall not be a member of the staff of the school/centre in question. The referral should be in writing and should include the written notes of previous stages.

Once the CE/nominee has received a written referral the matter will proceed as follows:

- The CE/nominee may request written submissions from the parties and the Line Manager/Principal/Co-ordinator;
- The CE/nominee may meet the employees individually or collectively;
- The CE/nominee may convene meetings, as necessary, to seek to achieve resolution;
- The CE/nominee shall act in a fair and impartial manner to seek to achieve resolution;
- The CE/nominee may exercise judgement, suggest approaches and make decisions which he/she considers necessary to resolve matters;
- The CE/nominee may make a final determination on any outstanding issues that remain unresolved;
- Resolutions and/or determinations shall be recorded and shared with the appropriate parties for implementation.

No determination or resolution of this process shall involve proceeding to a disciplinary process.

ADOPTION AND REVIEW

ETB ADOPTION DATE

This Grievance Procedure has been formally adopted by Laois and Offaly ETB on 23 March 2023.

REVIEW

This Grievance Procedure will be reviewed by the parties to this agreement at national level 12 months after the official implementation date.

Issued by the ETBI/Unions' Consultative Forum

24 February 2023