

Grievance Policy

Purpose

SVA is committed to maintaining and enhancing a workplace based on cooperation, mutual trust, respect and open communication. The Grievance Policy supports this commitment by setting out how grievances in relation to work or the work environment will be addressed by SVA. These may include grievances relating to:

- inappropriate workplace behaviour
- transfer or promotion
- leave
- remuneration
- performance discussions, or
- other work-related issues or policies.

Principles

SVA aims to ensure that we:

- *Resolve disputes fairly and impartially* - No assumptions or decisions will be made until all parties have been consulted and all facts in relation to a grievance have been considered and investigated
- *Resolve grievances in a timely manner* - Time limits are set at different stages of the grievance process so grievances can be resolved as quickly as possible
- *Consider all grievances confidentially and sensitively* - The people who help to resolve grievances are expected to treat all grievances in a discreet, confidential and sensitive manner; and
- *Prevent victimisation* - Parties reporting a grievance must not be victimised or treated differently as a result of having reported the grievance.

Approach

Informal procedure

We encourage you to try to resolve the problem informally at first, by either:

- speaking to the person or people involved in the issue, confidentially, as soon as possible and letting them know your concerns; or
- discussing the problem with a People & Culture representative as soon as possible after the problem has occurred. They may be able to help you if you do not feel confident handling the matter yourself or you are not sure how to approach the problem.

Formal procedure

If you are unable to resolve the grievance, wish to make a more formal complaint or if a serious breach of policy has occurred, the grievance should be reported to one of the following people as soon as possible after the issue arises:

- Direct Manager;
- Executive Director; or
- People & Culture representative.

The role of this person is to:

- obtain all the facts from the individual with respect to the grievance
- ask them what would be a satisfactory outcome
- explain how the grievance procedure works
- decide if they are the appropriate person to investigate the grievance. If that person feels that they are not the appropriate person, it will be referred to someone who can deal with the matter; and
- inform People & Culture, if they have not already been contacted.

The grievance will generally only be acted on with the consent of the person making the complaint. That person may withdraw from the process at any stage. However, if the investigator believes the grievance may give rise to a breach of SVA's legal obligations, SVA may still need to continue the investigation and take appropriate action.

1. Once the grievance is reported

The role of the person investigating the grievance is to:

- carry out any necessary investigations into the grievance. This may involve speaking to witnesses, which will be done discreetly to protect all parties' confidentiality
- meet with the person/people against whom the allegation has been made, ideally within three days of the grievance being raised. This meeting is to give the person(s) an opportunity to respond to the allegations
- within one to three weeks of the grievance being reported, let the person raising the grievance know whether enough information about the alleged conduct has been gathered
- make a decision as to how the grievance should be resolved
- communicate this decision to the parties involved.

2. Resolving the grievance

If the facts are not in dispute and the grievance involves a minor matter or a matter not requiring disciplinary action by SVA, then the matter will be mediated. The purpose of this process is not to allocate blame but rather to use informal methods to resolve the grievance. The most appropriate person to mediate between parties is usually a People & Culture representative.

If the matter involves an allegation which is more serious or involves a breach of one of SVA's policies then disciplinary action may be taken against the party/parties involved in accordance with SVA's *Disciplinary Policy*.

In both circumstances, outcomes will be monitored to make sure that everyone is working together constructively.

3. Unresolved grievances

If at any stage of the process, the reporting individual is not satisfied with the outcome or the way the grievance is being managed, the matter can be referred to the Director, People & Culture.

If this occurs, the matter and all relevant circumstances relating to it will be reviewed, including all reasonable steps that have been taken to resolve it. A finding will then be made, ideally within three weeks of it being referred.

Employee Assistance Program

During any stage of the process it may become evident that the employee requires additional support or assistance. The Employee Assistance Program is a professional, confidential counselling service for employees and their immediate family members.

Responsibilities

Whether an employee, contractor or consultant of SVA, we all have a responsibility to maintain and enhance a workplace based on cooperation, mutual trust, respect and open communication.

How are individuals responsible for the success of the policy?

All staff are expected to understand this policy. If you are involved in a grievance procedure then you are expected to keep information obtained during the process confidential. Breaches of confidentiality by an employee (other than reporting a grievance) may result in disciplinary action. A breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

How are managers responsible for the success of the policy?

All managers are expected to understand and implement this policy to ensure that all reported grievances, as far as is reasonably practicable, are treated in a confidential manner and are dealt with in accordance with this policy. As managers, we must display a positive commitment to the policy and to maintaining and enhancing a workplace based on cooperation, mutual trust, respect and open communication.

Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with SVA's:

- Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Performance Planning & Review Guideline
- Employee Assistance Program Guideline

These can be accessed from *The Source* under People & Culture.

Authorisation and Document Control

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