

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. POLICY AIMS

- 1.1. It is the College's aim to have few or no complaints about any aspect of its activity. However where complaints do arise the College will ensure that they are resolved promptly and fairly.
- 1.2. This policy and accompanying procedures have been produced to provide a definitive framework that promotes good practice and supports the College's Charter.
- 1.3. The College will seek to learn from valid complaints and will make changes to operating procedures and practices where necessary.

2. POLICY SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy covers all complaints made by dissatisfied students, parents and guardians and members of the general public.
- 2.2. The college will investigate complaints that relate to: (a) the quality and management of teaching and learning, (b) financial irregularity, (c) undue delay or non-compliance with published procedures, (d) equality & diversity issues, and (f) health & safety concerns.
- 2.3. This policy does not cover the following issues:
 - Individual employment issue which are the subject of separate procedures
 - Contractual disputes
 - Matters that are already the subject of legal action
- 2.4. The College reserves the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious and to deal with these as disciplinary matters if appropriate to do so.

3. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- 3.1. This policy and procedures will be reviewed biennially unless a more frequent review is necessary to ensure compliance with legislation.
- 3.2. The Principal shall include in the Autumn Term Report to the Governing Body an account of any formal complaints received under Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure in the previous college year and of the action taken to resolve them. Where an appeal is made to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Clerk to the Governing Body will ensure that an Appeals item is posted for the next full Governing Body meeting. This agenda item should include a brief outline report from the Chairman of the case, its status, and, if the appeal has been heard, its outcome and a short formal response from the Principal.
- 3.3. The Complaints Policy and Procedures will be covered in new staff and student induction procedures and included in the Parent Handbook for new students. It will also be placed on the College website.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. How to make a complaint

- 1.1. If you feel that the College has let you down in any way, please let us know. It is important to us that we understand what has gone wrong and how we can put it right, if at all possible.
- 1.2. The College aims to resolve all complaints as swiftly as possible. Our hope is that your complaint or dissatisfaction can be resolved directly between the person complaining and the person about whom the complaint is being made (i.e. through Stage 1: Conciliation). If this is not possible, or your complaint is serious, it will be dealt with under Stage 2 below (an investigation by a Senior Manager).
- 1.3. The College will not normally deal with a new complaint if it is more than three months old.

2. Stage 1: Conciliation

- 2.1. The College will normally aim to resolve your complaint within ten working days of receiving the complaint. If your complaint occurs during College holiday periods, this timescale may be extended – we will advise you of this at the time.
- 2.2. Full-time students who have a cause for concern should normally, in the first instance, speak to their tutor about it within a week of the issue emerging. Where the concern relates to their relationship with the tutor they might prefer to speak to their Head of House.
- 2.3. Any others, including adult students, with a cause for concern should contact College/Reception, again within a week of the issue emerging, and can expect arrangements to be made for the appropriate member of staff to contact them and, where necessary, arrange to meet and discuss the issue.
- 2.4. You will normally receive an acknowledgement that your complaint is being dealt with within five working days, either face-to-face (for most student complaints), by telephone, by e-mail or in writing.
- 2.5. We will communicate our proposed resolution of your complaint to you, either face-to-face (for most student complaints), by telephone, by e-mail or in writing.
- 2.6. If you remain dissatisfied with the resolution of your complaint or with the outcome of discussions at this informal stage and feel your complaint has not been resolved, you should contact the Principal in writing within ten working days of receiving the outcome of your complaint.

3. Stage 2: Investigation by a Senior Manager

- 3.1. If you remain dissatisfied with a Stage 1 outcome or you feel that your complaint is very serious, you may wish to contact the Principal directly by telephone, e-mail or letter.
- 3.2. The Principal (or his/her delegate) will establish if your complaint or dissatisfaction has been considered effectively under Stage 1 and will decide whether or not it should be dealt with by an investigation conducted by a member of the Senior Management Team or by conciliation if this stage has been by-passed.
- 3.3. The Principal (or his/her delegate) will acknowledge your complaint in writing within five working days of receiving the complaint and enclose a copy of the Complaints Policy with the letter together with an explanation of how the College intends to address the complaint.

- 3.4. The Principal will communicate the results of any investigation in writing to you within ten working days of receiving the complaint. If the investigation is likely to take longer than this, you will be informed in writing as soon as possible.
- 3.5. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation you should appeal in writing within 10 working days of the date of the Principal's communication outlining the basis of your dissatisfaction to the Chair of the Governing Body at the college address.
- 3.6. The Chair (or his/her delegate) will review the College response to the complaint. The outcome can be changed or upheld as a result of the review. The Chair (or his/her delegate) may decide the appeal should be dealt with by an Appeals Panel. In either case, you will be contacted in writing within 10 working days with either a decision on your appeal or the details of the Appeals Panel procedures.

4. Complaint about the Principal

- 4.1. If you wish to make a complaint about the Principal, you should write to the Chair of the Governing Body at the College address marking it 'personal and confidential'. The Chair will proceed in line with these guidelines, starting at the conciliation stage unless the matter is so serious s/he feels it should be dealt with under Stage 2.

5. Complaints about the Governing Body or Clerk

- 5.1. Anyone with a cause for concern about the conduct of the Governing Body should, in the first instance, contact the Clerk to the Governing Body. Complaints can be sent to Nicola Whitehead, Clerk to the Governing Body, The College of Richard Collyer, Hurst Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 2EJ.
- 5.2. Complaints about the Clerk should be sent to the Chair of the Governing Body at the College address marking it 'personal and confidential'.

6. Further steps

- 6.1. If a matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved, a complainant may refer his/her case to the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) by writing to: The Regional Director, The Young People's Learning Agency, Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Avenue, Guildford, GU1 4GA. It should be noted that a complaint to the YPLA is not a further stage of appeal. The YPLA can only consider complaints which relate to the quality of teaching and learning, resources and accommodation, unreasonable action when the college does not do what it says it will do, and does not follow its own procedures, including the complaints procedure, and health and safety situations which may put a student at risk of injury and harm. (For students on Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funded work (i.e. post-19 and apprenticeship programmes), the appropriate body is the SFA at the following address: Senior Accounts Director, Skills Funding Agency (South East) Princes House, 53 Queens Road, Brighton, BN1 3XB.)
- 6.2. If the college is unable to resolve any complaint relating to gaining information as set out in the college's Publication Scheme, he or she has a right to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner, the independent body who oversees the Freedom of Information Act, at the following address: Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

