

COMPLAINTS POLICY

MARCH 2019

Approved by Governing Body: 27th March 2019

Endorsed by F&GP on 18th March 2019

Reviewed by SMT on 27th Feb 2019

Next review (as above): March 2022



COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At Collyer's we strive to achieve high standards in the discharge of our responsibilities and to minimise the likelihood of concerns occurring. Where a concern does arise, we shall treat the matter seriously and aim to resolve it quickly, effectively and to the satisfaction of all parties.

2. POLICY AIMS

- 2.1 This policy and accompanying procedures have been produced to provide a clear, fair and workable framework that promotes good practice.
- 2.2 The College will seek to learn from valid complaints and will make changes to operating procedures and practices where necessary.

3. POLICY SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy covers all complaints made by dissatisfied students, parents and guardians and members of the general public.
- 3.2 The College has defined a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction relating to aspects of the College's service'. This definition will apply consistently across all areas of the College.
- 3.3 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.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The College will:
- acknowledge all formal complaints and aim to respond within a stated period of time;
 - deal reasonably and sensitively with all complaints; and
 - take action where appropriate.
- 4.2 The complainant will be expected to:
- bring their complaint to the College's attention within three months of the reason for the complaint occurring;
 - explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
 - allow the College reasonable time to deal with the matter; and
 - recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the College's control.

5. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- 5.1 This policy and procedures will be reviewed every three years unless a more frequent review is necessary, for example to ensure compliance with legislation.
- 5.2 The Principal shall provide an annual report to the Finance & General Purposes Committee 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.
- 5.3 The Complaints Policy and Procedures will be covered in new staff and student induction procedures, be made available to parents of new students and placed on the College website.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS/POLICIES

General

Appeals Procedure
Copyright Policy
Data Protection Policy
Environmental Policy
Equality and Diversity Policy
Fire Safety Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Publication Scheme

Student-related

Admissions Policy
Code of Conduct (Student)
Curriculum Policy
Exams Policy
Fees and Charges Policy
Fitness to Study Procedures
Quality Assurance Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Social Media Policy
Staff Cover Policy
Student Bullying and Harassment Policy
Student Disciplinary Policy
Student Fees Policy
Student Voice Policy
Supporting Learners at Collyer's
Travel Plan

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 with the member of staff who has direct responsibility for the matter in question (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 respond to 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 five working days 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 five working days 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 together with an explanation of how the College intends to address the complaint.
- 3.4 Any person against whom a complaint has been made will be told formally of the nature of the complaint, given a copy of this policy and procedure, and advised of their right to be accompanied in any investigation which follows.

- 3.5 Any investigation will be carried out as soon as possible and a report on the findings and recommendations be made to the Principal (or delegate).
- 3.6 The Principal (or delegate) 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. (The Principal (or delegate) will also separately tell any person against whom a complaint has been made if further investigation or action is to take place. N.B. Any such action is likely to be confidential and, as such, will not be shared with the complainant).
- 3.7 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 (or delegate's) communication outlining the basis of your dissatisfaction to the Chair of the Governing Body at the college address.
- 3.8 The Chair (or 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 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 After this stage, if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, the Education and Skills Funding Agency has a Complaints Procedure (available on their website).
- 6.2 If the college is unable to resolve any complaint relating to information rights practices the complainant has a right to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner, the independent body who oversees the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts. Details on how to report a concern are available on the ico website.
- 6.3 Nothing in this policy and procedure is intended to or has the effect of limiting an individual's rights under UK legislation.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

