

## **Complaints and Appeals - Policy and Procedures**

### **INTRODUCTION**

College Leadership Team will ensure that all complaints received are dealt with promptly. Ideally complaints should be resolved immediately and every effort will be made to achieve this. Any complaint that is not resolved by internal procedures is referred to an external independent agency, which will act as arbiter and adviser to produce an agreed resolution.

The policy outlined below has been developed as a means of dealing with serious complaints. Any matter that can be settled internally does not come under this heading. If the complainant fails to be satisfied by proposed action then an independent adjudicator will be appointed (in accordance with the arrangements described below).

#### General Principles regarding Complaints and Redress

1. All College publicity includes the name, address and telephone number of the Principal who deals with all serious complaints by conducting a full investigation. This procedure may include the gathering of advice, where necessary from medical, or educational bodies or social workers.
2. If the complaint is made against a specific member of staff and is likely to lead to disciplinary procedures, Director HR will be included in the investigation at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure fairness of investigation and adherence to Employment Law.
3. The Principal will give the complainant a full account of the investigation and outcome including, where appropriate, an explanation of future action.
4. The complainant will be given a reasonable time scale within which the complaint will be resolved.
5. If not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant can involve an independent agency to act as an arbitrator. The Care Quality Commission (03000 616161) are available to any complainant who wishes to pursue this independent course of action.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### Complaints by Student

1. All students are encouraged to communicate their complaints to any member of staff, particularly personal tutors and counsellors. The matter will then be passed on to the most appropriate member of the Leadership Team who will ascertain, on the day, the precise nature of the complaint by interviewing the complainant.
2. Having identified the problem a resolution will be suggested, and if agreed by the complainant, will be implemented as quickly as possible.
3. Failure to resolve the complaint will result in the referral of it to the College Principal or Directors, who will then conduct a full investigation, if necessary, seeking advice or guidance from relevant College staff, parents or professionals who have some involvement with the student concerned.

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Complaints by Parents or Guardians

1. Any formal complaint received is referred to the Principal.
2. All such complaints are, on the same day or the next working day, discussed by the relevant members of the Leadership Team.
3. Any of the Leadership Team may participate in the investigation of the circumstances of the complaint so that a resolution can be suggested as quickly as possible.
4. When all the evidence is gathered the matter is then discussed in detail by members of the Leadership Team and a response to the complaint is agreed.
5. The College response is then communicated to the complainant either by telephone, in the first instance or by letter or by the setting up of a meeting at an agreed venue where a mutually acceptable solution will be discussed.
6. If all the above procedures fail to resolve the complaint then the complainant, or the College, will be able to contact the EFA/LA/WG/Care Quality Commission who will appoint an adjudicator whose impartial advice must be discussed until there is mutual agreement concerning a resolution.

General Complaints – Staff/Public/Professionals

1. Any written or telephoned complaint will be referred immediately to the Principal, who will arrange a meeting of the staff concerned.
2. A thorough investigation of the complaint is initiated by the Principal, assisted by colleagues.
3. When the investigation is completed the Principal will speak to and/or write to the complainant explaining the matter and how the College proposes to redress the situation and to ensure that there is not a repetition of the problem.
4. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached then the complainant(s) will be invited to attend a meeting with members of the Leadership Team, chaired by a nominated Governor. This meeting will confirm or amend the proposals to redress the situation previously outlined. The notes and outcomes of this meeting will be sent by First Class post within two working days.

Appeal against dismissal

1. A written appeal against a decision made by the Principal, to dismiss a student, will be addressed by the Director, Student Services, or in his absence, a nominated Governor.
2. The Director, Student Services or nominated Governor, will review the facts and findings of the incident(s) that resulted in the decision to dismiss the student. The Director, Student Services or nominated Governor, will confirm or overturn the original decision following this investigation and the decision will be sent by First Class post within two working days of receipt of the appeal.