

Name of Policy:	<b>Complaints Policy</b>
Last Approved:	July 2023
Approved By:	Corporation via Standards committee
Policy Owner:	Principal

Our Mission: **To empower every student to fulfil their unique potential.**

Our Vision - We strive to be an inspirational, supportive and inclusive learning community that fosters creativity and independence, equipping every student to enjoy an enriching life and to make a positive difference in the world.

Our Values: Our values define us as a college. We seek to uphold them in all that we do.

**Always Learning.** We are a collaborative teaching and learning community that encourages each other to innovate, persevere and grow.

**Diversity in people and ideas.** We are at our best when we can be ourselves in a safe, supportive environment where everyone is valued, and different perspectives are welcome.

**Empathy.** We treat each other with kindness and respect, taking responsibility for our actions.

**Integrity.** We keep our commitments and are honest, fair and trustworthy.

**Sustainability.** We act to reduce our direct environmental impact and to create a sustainable future for everyone.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 We aim to offer the highest standards of teaching and learning, advice and care. We are committed to continuous improvement and listen carefully to the views of our students and others.
- 1.2 We recognise that from time to time, an individual may feel that the College has fallen short of these high standards. When concerns or issues arise we will treat them seriously, respond promptly, and investigate fully so as to resolve the matter in a timely and sensitive way.
- 1.3 We recognise too that complaints can be an important source of feedback. Complaints will be monitored and analysed and we will use this feedback to help us to learn and improve our work.
- 1.4 This policy sets out the process by which complaints will be handled and is designed to ensure a fair, consistent and open approach.

- 1.5 This complaints process can be used by students, parents/carers or members of the public. Concerns raised by staff in the capacity of employees will usually be addressed through the line management process and/or other relevant policies.

## **2. INFORMAL CONCERNS**

- 2.1 In the first instance our aim is to resolve any issue quickly and informally. Any concern should be raised promptly either directly with the person involved or with another appropriate member of staff. This may be a teacher, Course Team Leader, Director, Progress Coach or Head of Department or Service Manager.
- 2.2 Details of any concern will be shared with the person who is the subject of issue raised and we will inform and involve the appropriate manager. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem to the complainant's satisfaction.
- 2.3 If the issue is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction they may wish to use the formal complaints procedure.

## **3. FORMAL COMPLAINTS**

- 3.1 Formal complaints can be made by email, letter or by using the complaints form. This form can be obtained from reception, or can be downloaded from the College website. If you have difficulties in providing details in writing please let the College know and we will handle your complaint accordingly.
- 3.2 All formal complaints should be sent to the Principal.
- 3.3 When a complaint is received it will be recorded in the complaints file. The Principal will assign a senior colleague to investigate and respond to the complaint.
- 3.4 If an anonymous complaint is made, the College will not be in a position to notify the complainant of the outcome of any investigation or action taken. Anonymity also means the College may have difficulty in investigating matters raised in the complaint/concern. Due consideration will be given to the apparent seriousness and credibility of the issues raised in the complaint, as part of investigation.
- 3.5 A letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within five working days of receipt of the complaint.
- 3.6 Following investigation, a full written response will be sent to the complainant within ten working days (where possible). Should there be a delay, we will notify the complainant, explain why and clarify the revised timescale.
- 3.7 The written response will clarify the outcome of the investigation and outline, where appropriate, any action the college intends to take to resolve the issue.

- 3.8 Should the matter be resolved during the period in which the complaint is being investigated, the relevant manager will write to the complainant providing an explanation of the situation and confirming any action that has been taken.
- 3.9 The complaint investigation may require the manager to speak to the complainant directly and to other associated parties. We will provide full details of the complaint to the person/people who is/are subject(s) of the complaint.
- 3.10 If the complainant is unhappy with the college response to their complaint, they may appeal to the Principal.
- 3.11 If the original investigation has been undertaken directly by the Principal then the appeal should be made to the Chair of Corporation (ie. the Chair of the College's governing body) via the Clerk to the Corporation. The Chair of Corporation will then decide how to proceed and within a reasonable timeframe. For example, this could include the convening of a panel to review the complaint. The complainant or any others invited to attend such a panel will be given at least 5 working days' notice and informed how the panel meeting will operate.
- 3.12 All appeals should be made within 10 working days of receipt of the college's response to the complaint. The appeal must make clear why the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome.
- 3.13 Where a complaint relates directly to the actions of the Principal or the Clerk to the Corporation, it should be sent to the Chair of Corporation.

#### **4 Further recourse**

- 4.1 If through all the processes outlined above, the college has been unable to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction, under the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) Funding Agreement, students, employers and other third parties have a right to make a complaint to the ESFA. The ESFA will investigate only complaints that meet the following criteria:
- a) the institution has not complied with its own complaints procedure when considering the complaint.
  - b) the institution has failed to comply with an obligation imposed on it under its funding agreement.

Complaints under this section may include, but are not limited to the quality or management of learning provision; and poor administration.

The ESFA will not investigate complaints where another body or legal route of challenge is more appropriate. Examples include:

- exam results or curriculum content. Complaints of this nature should be dealt with by the appropriate examination awarding body or by Ofqual;
- individual employment issues that are a matter for the employer and the employee, and where employment law provides appropriate remedies;

- institutional contractual disputes, including for example, complaints about the terms of sub-contracting agreements between an institution and a sub-contractor;
- matters that are already the subject of legal action, proposed legal action, or where legal proceedings are the most appropriate way of resolving the dispute;
- matters relating to child protection/safeguarding which will be referred immediately to the relevant local authority.

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure)

Complaints should be emailed to [complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk), or put them in a letter to:

**Customer Service Team,  
Education and Skills Funding Agency  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry CV1 2WT**