



# **COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE COLLEGE PROCEDURES**

**2019/20**

## **COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE COLLEGE PROCEDURES**

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### **Responsibility**

**SMT member:**      **Principal**

### **Aim**

The purpose of the procedure is to set out how anyone with a complaint can have that complaint dealt with, and the action which should be taken by those in the College receiving the complaint.

The procedure covers complaints made by parents, students and others about the service provided by the College or the performance of duties and exercises of power by the Board of Directors.

The formal procedures will not cover complaints about incidents which happened more than three months before unless there are obvious reasons why the complaint could not have been taken up before then.

### **General Principles**

All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. Each stage of the procedure should be completed within 20 working days. [The College cannot however set a timescale for complaints which are referred to the appropriate funding agency or local authority.]

All complaints will be investigated, fully and confidentially.

Anyone who is the subject of a complaint has the right to know and will be informed at an early stage of any allegations made and have the opportunity to respond.

At all stages complainants may be accompanied by a friend or representative.

The main aim at all times will be to ensure that any complaint is resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

### **Stages in the Complaints Procedure**

This procedure defines three stages or levels at which a complaint could be considered.

- |         |                                                                                |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage 1 | The Informal Stage                                                             |
| Stage 2 | Formal Complaint to                                                            |
|         | (i)     the Principal                                                          |
|         | (ii)    the Board of Directors                                                 |
| Stage 3 | Formal Complaint to the funding agency, local authority or Secretary of State. |

## **Informal Stage**

Complaints from students at the College should usually go first to the Personal Tutor and if the problem is not resolved, to the Director of Studies.

The Director of Studies will note the complaint and give you a copy. If you are not satisfied with the response you have had from the Director of Studies you may ask to see the Deputy Principal.

If you still find the response unsatisfactory you may appeal to the Principal. You should make an appointment to see him with the Principal's P.A. or at the main College Office. At this stage you may choose to see him informally or you may elect to follow the formal complaints procedure which is described below.

Complaints from parents or members of the community will usually go first to the Principal. You should make it clear in your letter (or telephone call) whether or not you are invoking the formal procedure.

## **Formal Procedure**

The Principal will review the evidence and the action taken so far and will invite the complainant to a meeting within 20 working days of first receiving the complaint. He will ensure that every effort is made to find a mutually convenient time and that at least three days' notice is given.

If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached at this meeting the Principal will explain the procedure by which a complaint may be made to the Board of Directors.

Complaints from parents of students with special educational needs regarding the support given should follow the same procedures. The College has nominated the Director of Studies to be an initial point of contact to support parents/students with this process.

### *Formal Complaint to the Board of Directors*

You should either write to the Chairman of the Board of Directors (whose name and address is available from the Principal's P.A.) or ask for the letter already given to the Principal to be forwarded to the Chairman. The Principal's P.A. will record this and acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. It will usually be considered by the Board of Directors or a designated group of not less than three directors acting on its behalf.

The group will meet to consider the complaint within 20 working days following receipt of the complaint by the Chairman.

The complainant will be invited to a meeting to discuss the complaint in more detail. The complainant will be given at least three days' notice of the meeting and every effort will be made to make it at a time convenient to them.

When the complaint has been fully investigated and considered, the Chairman of the Board of Directors will inform the complainant in writing of the outcome. This will include an explanation of the conclusion, the reasons for that conclusion and any action taken or proposed.

### **Final Complaint to the funding agency**

If any complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction and they believe the College is behaving unreasonably, they may complain to the education funding agency:

ESFA Institutions – Complaints  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry  
CV1 2WT

### **Notes on the Handling of Formal Complaints**

Every complaint must be promptly acknowledged.

A copy of the complaints procedure should be sent to the complainant when the procedure enters the formal stage.

Urgent complaints must be identified and appropriate steps taken to give them priority.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors should ensure that the complaint has been directed correctly and if not inform the complainant how it should be redirected.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors should consider whether the complaint can be dealt with without further investigation because it is misconceived, outside the scope of the procedures or relates to something that has already

been investigated. If so, it may be possible to reply to the complainant without further investigation.

If an investigation is required, this should be initiated promptly, and should be such as to ensure that all the necessary and relevant information and advice is available to enable a proper and reasoned decision on the complaint to be reached.

The complainant should be informed of the decision in writing. The letter should contain details of the information available, the reasons for the decision and any steps taken so that the complainant can see that the matter has been fully and fairly investigated.

The letter should also indicate what further recourse is available if the complainant is not satisfied.

### **Monitoring of Complaints**

The Board of Directors will wish to monitor the number and nature of complaints made under the procedure in order to establish whether there is a pattern of complaints and recurring concerns which should be addressed.

There will be no formal monitoring of complaints dealt with under the informal stage though these will be noted to provide information about concerns or misunderstandings.

Monitoring will be undertaken in respect of complaints dealt with under formal Stages 2 and 3. Monitoring will cover the number and nature of complaints, the time taken to deal with them and the outcome, and will form part of the College's quality monitoring procedures.