

A. 21 – Complaints Policy

a) Rationale

Every complaint is a matter of concern to the college and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness. Whenever a complaint is upheld, every effort will be made to rectify the issue and, if necessary, action will be taken to try to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem. The college will not investigate anonymous complaints or allegations but confidentiality will be respected and the identity of informants will be protected whenever necessary.

b) Timescale

Complaints to the college will normally be acknowledged within two working days of receipt and a response will usually be provided within five college days. When a matter requires fuller investigation than is possible within the normal timescale, the complainant will be informed and an indication given of when a final response can be expected.

c) Definition

Parents will frequently raise legitimate concerns about their children's education. Most parents do not regard such inquiries as "complaints" in the formal sense. Nevertheless, their concerns will be addressed with similar urgency and thoroughness. If matters raised as concerns are not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the dissatisfied party may wish to appeal through the formal complaints procedure.

d) Complaints Procedure

- **Complaints from Students**
Students who feel they have been unfairly treated in college are encouraged to speak to the appropriate manager, usually House Leader. He/she will investigate the complaint and will seek to resolve the matter informally between the student and the member of staff. Where the complaint or subsequent investigation raises issues of a disciplinary significance, the matter should be referred immediately to the Principal or a Vice Principal.
- **Complaints from Staff**
Staff complaints should be directed to the Principal's PA who will complete a complaint form (Formal Complaint Record) and refer the matter to the Principal.
- **Complaints from Parents/Visitors**
Verbal complaints or allegations made by a visitor to the college will be referred to any available member of the Senior Leadership Team who will complete a complaint form
- **Written Complaints**
written complaints received by college staff should be copied immediately to the Principal's PA who will complete a complaint form and attach the copy letter.
- **Complaints received by Governors**
In normal circumstances, the governor should advise the complainant to contact the college direct. If the complainant is reluctant to do so, the governor should ensure he/she understands the full facts as perceived by the complainant without making any commitment or comment on the issue, except that it will be investigated and that a response will be provided either direct to the complainant or via the governor. The governor should then discuss the matter with the Chair of Governors and the Principal.

It is the responsibility of the receiving governor to ensure that the complaint is acknowledged within two working days of receipt. The letter should be passed to the Principal and the Chair of Governors should be informed.

The matter will be investigated in the usual way and a copy of the response sent to the receiving governor and the Chair of Governors.

e) Processing of Complaints

The Principal will investigate or cause an investigation to be made of all complaints, except in cases relating to alleged misconduct of the Principal. Where such allegations have been made against the Principal, a Vice Principal may be authorised to investigate in the first instance. Thereafter the adopted Personnel Procedures apply.

No action will be taken without the subject(s) of the complaint having opportunity to comment on the complaint and to suggest independent witnesses who might be called upon to provide evidence to the investigating manager.

Most complaints are satisfactorily resolved by the appropriate manager reporting back, usually in writing, to the complainant. If the complainant is still not satisfied, they may appeal to the Principal, who has final authority in matters of internal organisation, management and control of the college. If a parent feels that the Principal has acted unreasonably in the exercise of his duties and powers, he/she may appeal in writing to the Chair of Governors.

The outcome of the investigation and any action taken as a result will be entered in the record of complaints. The Principal will provide a report each term to the Full Governing Body on complaints received and any implications arising.

f) The Role of the Governing Body

Complaints about the college's policies or procedures will be referred to the Chair of Governors for consideration by the relevant governors' committee.

Complaints about the Principal or any governor should be directed to the Chair of Governors. Allegations of misconduct will be dealt with according to the relevant county procedures.

Representations to the Chair of Governors concerning the treatment of a complaint may, at the discretion of the Chair, be referred to an Appeal Panel of three governors convened for that purpose.

In matter which fall within the scope of county procedures, such as for exclusion appeals or disciplinary matters, those procedures will take precedence.

g) Link Documents

Appendix X6 – Grievance Principles and Procedures

h) Policy Review date

Reviewed 11/1/2011.
SLT person with responsibility - JNS
Next review date January 2012