



SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENT

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Policy Summary

1.1 The Complaints Policy and Procedure provides the framework within which:

- anyone who has experienced dissatisfaction with School services can raise their concerns, and
- staff should deal with complaints from students, parents, employers, contractors, local residents, visitors and others.

1.2 It does not replace School procedures for academic appeals and disciplinary action; those procedures should be used where appropriate.

2. School Mission

Students and clients

- To work with all students to achieve their aims academically and in terms of personal development and in a safe and secure environment.

Staff

- To recruit and retain well-qualified, experienced and motivated staff and work with them to develop their career and skills.

Products and Services

- To develop and continuously improve products and services in accordance with what students, clients and the market wants.

Growth

- To grow in a prudent way with the resources available.

3. Business Ethos

3.1 The School is committed to business excellence, business ethics and corporate social responsibility.

3.2 The School will respond to any dissatisfaction with its services fairly and promptly:

- An initial response will be provided within 10 working days
- A further, more detailed response will be made if appropriate
- You may be offered a meeting with the parties involved if appropriate

- You may appeal to the Director of Studies if you are dissatisfied with the outcome
- Information on how to take the complaint further will be provided if you are not satisfied with the School's response

4. Standards of Service

4.1 The School Student Handbook sets out the standards and services learners can expect us to provide, as well as the learner's responsibilities.

4.2 Anyone not satisfied with the level of service should feel able to approach relevant staff to address their concern promptly and directly.

4.3 Every attempt should be made to resolve complaints informally through a dialogue with those immediately concerned.

5. School Accountability

5.1 **All School staff** have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously, and dealing with them promptly and courteously in accordance with the procedure set out below.

5.2 **The Director of Studies** has a responsibility for resolving a complaint, and leading or contributing to an investigation into a complaint when this is considered appropriate.

5.3 **The Director of Studies** is responsible for resolving complaints which have reached the appeals stage and may nominate the Director(s) if he/she has not been previously involved in the investigation.

5.4 **The Director of Studies** is also responsible for dealing with referrals after the appeals stage where a complainant remains dissatisfied with how their complaint has been dealt with by the School, and for advising on using the procedure and taking a complaint to external agencies.

6. Procedures for Dealing with Complaints in the School

6.1 Stage One [Informal - up to Director of Studies]

6.1.1 Concerns should be raised in the first instance with the person or area concerned as soon as possible, *and not later than within ten weeks of the incident.*

6.1.2 Complainants should normally be directed to the Director of Studies unless the student's tutor or other member of staff approached can easily resolve the issue.

6.1.3 Every reasonable effort should be made to resolve the complaint promptly at Director of Studies level.

6.1.4 If appropriate, a meeting will be offered between the person complaining and the area they are complaining about to arrive at an agreed resolution.

6.1.5 If a complaint is about a member of staff, it should be referred to the Director of Studies.

6.1.6 Verbal complaints to Reception and staff in public areas and requests to meet with the Director of Studies should be referred to the Director of Studies

6.1.7 At this informal stage complaints may be made in person, by phone or by e-mail. The complainant must be kept informed of progress at all stages, with an acknowledgement of the complaint made within 3 working days, and an initial response within 10 working days. All outcome letters should be copied to the Director of Studies and owners. If the issue is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction the complaint moves to stage 2.

6.2 Stage Two [Formal - up to Director of Studies level]

6.2.1 If the Tutor or other member of staff other than the Director of Studies is unable to resolve the issue, it should be referred to the Director of Studies.

6.2.2 If a complainant has been through Stage 1 and remains dissatisfied, they should be advised to submit their complaint *in writing or by e-mail* to the Director.

6.2.3 The Director will investigate and decide to:

- Dismiss the complaint as unfounded, giving reasons.
- Propose an amicable settlement.
- Uphold or partially uphold the complaint, offer an apology, take appropriate steps to address the issue and to avoid a similar problem arising in future.

6.2.4 All complaints should be dealt with as quickly as possible. All formal complaints will be acknowledged, an initial response will be given within 10 working days and a further more detailed response provided where appropriate. All formal complaints will receive a formal written response outlining the outcome, and the right of appeal where appropriate.

6.2.4 At any time during the complaints procedure a parent/guardian or agent can request a hearing and a panel will be set up. The panel will be set up by one of the directors and will include at least three people not directly involved in the original complaint or matters detailed in the complaint. The Director will ask the independent listener if he/she is able to attend the panel as he/she has no dealing with the running of the School. If he/she is unavailable then another appropriate adult will be found who is independent to the running of the School. The panel will have permission to make judgements based on their findings and make recommendations to the School. All parties involved (where relevant) will be given copies of the findings and recommendations of the panel hearing. Parents will be invited to the panel hearing and if they request will be accompanied by an appropriate adult during the hearing.

6.3 Appeals [Director]

6.3.1 If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the School's response to their complaint, they may appeal in writing to the Director.

6.3.2 The Director, if not previously involved in the case, will investigate the complaint and the School's response and compile a full report.

6.3.3 The Director will decide to:

- Uphold the original decision/dismiss the complaint as unfounded.
- Refer the complaint back to the person concerned and propose an amicable settlement.

- Uphold or partially uphold the complaint, offer an apology, recommend appropriate steps are taken to address the issue and to avoid a similar problem arising in future.

6.3.4 The decision of the Director is final and the complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome within 5 working days.

7. Getting Help

7.1 This Complaints Policy and Procedure will be published on the School website and made available to all students during induction.

7.2 Staff requiring help should contact the Director of Studies.

7.3 Students requiring help should approach their tutor.

8. Record-Keeping and Reporting

8.1 **The Director of Studies** should maintain a clear record of all complaints dealt with. Issues should be fed into the School's Monitoring and Evaluation and other quality improvement processes as appropriate.

8.2 At Stage 2 [formal] the **The Director of Studies** will log that a formal complaint is in progress.

8.3 **The Director of Studies** will maintain a record of all appeals and outcomes.

8.4 Complainants will be advised that, while **confidentiality** will be respected as far as possible, it is not normally possible to resolve complaints without disclosing details of a complaint to relevant staff in order to allow the School a fair opportunity to resolve the issue.

9. Feedback

Students and parents/agents can use the feedback mechanism on the web site and/ or feedback forms can be supplied on request.

10. Regulatory Bodies

The commission for Social Care Inspectors can be contacted:

Telephone

- 0845 015 0120
- 0191 233 3323

E-mail

- enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk