

Complaints Procedure

Learning together for success and progression

Approved by Academy Trust Board: July 2021

Complaints Procedure

Trustee Committee Responsible:	Governance and HR Committee
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	Principal
Status and Review Cycle:	3 yearly
Current Review:	July 2021
Next Review Date:	July 2024

The College aims to offer the highest possible standards of education and student guidance to its students. At all times we seek to promote inclusivity, tolerance and respect of others within a community that is supportive and caring. Despite our best intentions from time to time, things do not always go to plan. When this happens, you may wish to make a complaint. These procedures provide the framework for enabling complaints to be dealt with objectively, fairly and efficiently.

Key Principles

- Objectivity* - those investigating the complaint will take into account the views of all concerned and weigh up all relevant evidence carefully. In dealing with complaints, the College will have regard to promote respect, tolerance and inclusivity for others
- Confidentiality* - any party's reasonable entitlement to confidentiality will be honoured
- Fairness* - If action is required, it will be as appropriate to the nature of the issue, the impact of legislative requirements and in accordance with the general procedures and policies of the College
- Learning* - The College will seek to reflect and learn from complaints found to have validity and review its operating procedures and practices as appropriate

Wherever possible we believe that the vast majority of complaints can be resolved informally through direct communication with the member of staff responsible for the area of College activity involved in the complaint.

Scope of the Procedure

The College will investigate complaints that include the following areas:

- The quality of teaching and learning
- Financial irregularity
- Non-compliance or delay with published procedures
- Poor administration
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues
- Health and Safety concerns
- Confidentiality

The College is not able to investigate complaints in relation to the following:

- Externally awarded results or curriculum content where a more appropriate form of redress would be the Examining Body or Ofqual
- Individual employment issues which are the subject of separate procedures
- Contractual disputes
- Data Protection which should be raised directly with the College Data Protection Officer dpo@godalming.ac.uk
- Matters that are the subject of legal action
- Unsuccessful applications by prospective students as these are covered by the Admissions Policy

The College reserves the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious.

This Procedure is reviewed every 3 years by the Governance and HR Committee. This Committee will receive an annual report on the number of complaints and categories of complaints in order to monitor the College's working practices and effectiveness of its policies and procedures.

The Procedure

There are three stages which are as follows:

Stage One: Informal Stage

You should ideally speak with the member of staff closest to the problem. If students or parent/carers have cause for concern, the initial contact should be with the student's personal tutor or subject teacher. If the complaint is more general, your initial contact should be made to the Head of Administration, who will pass on concerns to the most relevant member of staff. If the complaint is unable to be resolved informally, you will be informed of the formal stage of the procedure.

Stage Two: Formal Stage

If your complaint cannot be settled through a more informal route or is of a sufficiently serious nature in the first place, then these concerns should be directed, in writing, to the Principal. They will arrange for your complaint to be investigated. The Principal will contact you within 5 working days to confirm receipt of the complaint, clarify any issues and inform you of who has been appointed to investigate your complaint. Complaints against the Principal should be made in writing to the Chair of the Academy Trust

The College will aim to provide you with a written response on the results of the investigation into the complaint within 20 working days of receipt of your written complaint, if the investigation is to take longer than 20 working days you will be informed.

Stage Three: Appeal

- If you are still dissatisfied at the end of Stage Two, formal stage, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- The Chair, or delegated alternative, will reconsider the matter directly in accordance with the key principles above and they may make further enquiries to clarify any particular points or issues.
- If they consider that there are sufficient grounds for appeal against the outcome at the Stage Two investigation, the Chair will convene a panel of three Trustees to hear your appeal. This panel will convene and arrive at their decision within 20 working days of their decision to grant the appeal.
- Stage 3 is the final stage of the Complaints Procedure and the decision provided at Appeal is final.