

Complaints Procedure

Learning together for success and progression

Approved by Academy Trust Board: July 2018

Complaints Procedure

Trustee Committee Responsible:	Governance and HR Committee
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	Principal
Status and Review Cycle:	3 yearly
Current Review:	July 2018
Next Review Date:	July 2021

The College aims to offer the best possible standards of education and student guidance to its students and a high degree of efficiency in the administration of all related services. Despite our best intentions from time to time, things do not always go to plan. When this happens and you may wish to make a complaint. These procedures provide the framework for enabling complaints to be dealt with fairly and efficiently.

Key Principles

Complaints will be dealt with:-

- Objectively* - 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
- Confidentially* - any party's reasonable entitlement to confidentiality will be honoured
- Fairly* - 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

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 and Diversity issues
- Health and Safety concerns
- Confidentiality

The College is not able to investigate complaints about policies agreed by the Academy Trust. Other areas excluded from this procedure are:

- Examination 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

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.

Informal Stage

The complainant should speak or write to 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, initial contact should be made to the Head of Administration who will pass on concerns to the most relevant member of staff.

Formal Stage

If complaints cannot be settled through a more informal route or are of a sufficiently serious nature in the first place, then these concerns should be directed, in writing, as follows:

- Deputy Principal, for issues relating to teaching and learning
- Assistant Principal, for issues relating to student support
- Finance Director, for more general issues associated with the College

If uncertain, complaints should be addressed in writing to the Principal

- Complaints against the Principal should be made in writing to the Chair of the Academy Trust

In all cases, the nature of the problem should be explained and why it is felt the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved at the informal stage. This will be noted in the College's Complaints log. The complaint will be acknowledged within ten working days of receipt, and an indication of who will be dealing with it and when to expect a formal response will be provided. Please note holiday periods may lengthen the process. The Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, Finance Director, or if applicable, the Chair of the Academy Trust, will either ask a senior manager to investigate the complaint or conduct the investigation themselves.

Appeal

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response given at the formal stage the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Academy Trust. The Chair, or delegated alternative, will reconsider the matter directly in accordance with the key principles above
- A formal response to the appeal will be issued within two working weeks of the receipt of the appeal, again holiday periods may lengthen this process.
- The decision provided at the Appeal Procedure is final