

Complaints Policy			
Current Status:	Operational	Last Review:	September 2020
Responsibility for Review:	Group Director HR & Shared Services	Next Review:	September 2021
Internal Approval:	SAT SET	Originated:	September 2015

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. As a result of the various activities of the Trust, the number of students, customers, clients, parents and guardians involved and the large number of businesses and organisations with which the Trust works, complaints may, from time to time, arise.
- 1.2. In this context complaints are deemed to involve an expression of dissatisfaction, grievance or fault finding about the Trust.
- 1.3. All issues are logged, whether dealt with as a formal or informal complaint, to ensure fairness, to enable the Trust to respond quickly to the situation, and to support the Trust to change our policies and procedures where this may be deemed appropriate.

2. Application and Scope

- 2.1. The Trust will thoroughly investigate any complaint, whether informal or formal, relating to the day-to-day operation of the Trust and the standards of service we provide.
- 2.2. Areas excluded from the policy are:
 - a) Curriculum content or examination results where other forms of redress are more appropriate such as the examining body of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and in these cases complainants should be referred to the appropriate body.
 - b) Employment issues which are covered by staff Grievance Procedures.
 - c) Any matter that is the subject of legal action.
 - d) Any complaint which is deemed to be vexatious or malicious following investigation.

3. Resolving a Complaint – Students

- 3.1. Students are encouraged to resolve a complaint informally before commencing with the Formal Complaints Procedure. This initial informal stage should normally involve a discussion directly with the relevant member(s) of staff or with his/her Personal Progress Tutor/Student Achievement Mentor.

- 3.2. The student complainant should attempt to resolve the matter informally as soon as possible and no later than fourteen working days after the event or problem has occurred.
- 3.3. Where no informal resolution can be achieved within fourteen working days of the initial complaint being raised, the student complainant may choose to progress their complaint by using the Formal Complaints Procedure.

4. The Procedures

4.1. Informal Complaints

- 4.1.1. There can be instances when a complainant may wish to remain anonymous or request that the issue be dealt with informally. Such individuals should be directed to the person who is directly concerned or best suited to resolve that issue. The details can be emailed to the relevant person if preferred. For students, this is likely to be the Personal Progress Tutor/Student Achievement Mentor. In circumstances where these individuals are the source of the complaint then the appropriate Director or Head of Curriculum or Student Services Manager should be contacted. Details should be logged as 'informal' and placed in the 'Complaints File' which is retained in Student Services.
- 4.1.2. For those individuals who are unsure as to whom to contact then in the first instance they should contact the Student Services Manager from the College in which they are based who will direct them to the most appropriate member of staff.
- 4.1.3. In most instances informal complaints will not receive a formal written response but nevertheless must be dealt with promptly.
- 4.1.4. Responsibility for the prompt follow up of informal complaints will sit with the relevant manager. The manager should endeavour to resolve the complaint but should escalate if it is evident that a resolution is not likely to be met. This should be done to prevent it becoming a more serious matter.

4.2. Formal Complaints

- 4.2.1. Formal complaints should be submitted in writing and addressed to the Executive Assistant (EA)/Personal Assistant (PA) to the Principal in the respective college who will then send a copy to the PA to the Chief Executive.
- 4.2.2. Any other member of staff receiving a formal letter of complaint must pass the complaint to the EA/PA to the Principal and Senior Leadership team on the day of receipt together with any additional information they may hold on the incident. This may help to speed up the response time.
- 4.2.3. A written acknowledgement will be sent by the EA/PA to the Principal and Senior Leadership team within three working days and the details logged on the Complaints Log for checking and reporting purposes. All correspondence will be filed securely.
- 4.2.4. Any letter submitted should clearly set out the circumstances of the complaint, any individuals or witnesses involved and any relevant dates or times.

Complaints Policy

- 4.2.5. Where possible, and to provide the greatest opportunity for the complaint to be actioned, complaints should be submitted in a timely fashion in order to facilitate a resolution.
- 4.2.6. Complaints will be investigated fairly and quickly with the intention of satisfactorily resolving the matter, identifying the causes and symptoms and upholding or rejecting the complaint for the benefit of all involved.
- 4.2.7. A considered Trust view on the complaint will be made by the relevant member of the Management Team. They will ensure that a detailed response with evidence is sent to the EA/PA to the Principal and Senior Leadership team within the prescribed timescale where appropriate.
- 4.2.8. The College Principal or delegate will respond in writing within fifteen working days from the date of the receipt of the complaint, detailing the outcome of the investigation. If the investigation is going to take more than fifteen working days, the EA/PA to the Principal and Senior Leadership Team will send a further holding letter.
- 4.2.9. Where complaints are received within fifteen working days of a holiday period, or during a holiday period, it is expected that the complaint response will take longer than fifteen working days due to the absence of appropriate staff to investigate. This will be confirmed in writing.
- 4.2.10. Following the resolution of the complaint, where required, the Director/Head of Curriculum or Student Services Manager or relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team must complete the Complaints log.

4.3. Appeals

- 4.3.1. If the complainant remains dissatisfied or aggrieved or in disagreement with the decision made or reasons given, they may appeal against the decision. A complainant has ten working days in which to submit an appeal. The reason for the appeal should be clearly stated in writing and sent to the PA to the Chief Executive.
- 4.3.2. A written acknowledgement will be sent by the PA to the Chief Executive within three working days.
- 4.3.3. The Chief Executive will assign another senior manager to who were not involved in dealing with the original complaint to assist review the claim. They will consider all the documentation available relating to the issues raised. The Chief Executive will respond within fifteen working days from the date of the receipt of the appeal. If the review of the complaint is going to take more than fifteen working days, PA to the Chief Executive will send a further holding letter. The decision at the end of this stage is final and will be communicated in writing.
- 4.3.4. The College Principal will produce a report for the Local Governing Body at the end of each academic year giving a summary of any complaints. Any structural or strategic issues raised by this report will be discussed and, if necessary, incorporated in the appropriate/relevant Trust's Quality Improvement Plan.

Complaints Policy

Addresses for correspondence:

<p>One Sixth Form College</p> <p>Executive Assistant to the Principal and Senior Leadership Team One Sixth Form College Scrivener Drive Ipswich Suffolk IP8 3SU</p> <p>Executive Assistant to the Principal and Senior Leadership Team Abbeygate Sixth Form College Beestons Way Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP33 3YU</p>	<p>PA To the Chief Executive One Sixth Form College Scrivener Drive Ipswich Suffolk IP8 3SU</p>
--	--

Revision History – Complaints Policy

Revision date	Reason for revision	Section number	Changes made
24/9/20	Create SAT policy		Updated One to SAT Included reference to sending to respective college Removed Appeal panel and replaced with CEO