

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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At Woking College we aim to provide the very best for our students and to contribute to the life of our local community. We seek to promote inclusivity, tolerance and respect for others at all times within a caring, supportive environment which values diversity. Despite our best intentions, from time to time things can go wrong. When this happens you may wish to make a complaint. The procedure set out below tells you how to go about doing so.

## 1) INTRODUCTION

- i) It is the policy of the College to resolve as quickly and fairly as possible any complaint a stakeholder may have, about services provided by the College. In this context, a stakeholder may be a student, a parent, a member of the public or a member of staff.
- ii) The purpose of the Complaints Procedure is to provide an opportunity for the complaint to be resolved as quickly as possible by carefully logging and analysing complaints to provide a means of identifying problems and weaknesses in the services provided by the College.
- iii) In the case of a cause for complaint by a student, in the first instance, the **student** should seek to resolve the matter informally. The matter should be referred to the student's Personal Tutor, or the person responsible for the subject of the complaint. The person dealing with the complaint should attempt to resolve the complaint and record the complaint and his/her action in the Complaints Register, held by the Deputy Principal. If the complaint cannot be resolved in this way, then the student has the right to use the Formal Complaints Procedure outlined below.
- iv) In the event of a complaint being made by a stakeholder other than a student, the person receiving the complaint will attempt to resolve the complaint informally and register the complaint as an informal complaint by using the Complaints Register kept by the Principal's PA. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant has the right to make a formal complaint in writing by sending a letter to the Deputy Principal.

## 2) SCOPE OF PROCEDURES

The College will investigate complaints that include the following areas:

- i) the quality and management of learning provision
  - ii) financial irregularity
  - iii) undue delay or non-compliance with published procedures
  - iv) poor administration
  - v) equality and diversity issues
  - vi) health and safety concerns
  - vii) confidentiality
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The procedures should **not** cover the following for which separate procedures exist.

- a) Representations by students against decisions made by Awarding Bodies (Exams Appeals Procedure).
  - b) Complaints against misconduct by another student (Student Disciplinary Procedure).
  - c) Complaints involving allegations of misconduct by a member of staff (Staff Disciplinary Procedure).
  - d) Complaints relating to sexual or racial discrimination (Equality and Diversity Procedure).
  - e) Complaints by a member of staff against another member of staff.
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### 3) **FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

There are three stages in dealing with a complaint. These are:

- Stage one** – Informal resolution by discussion
- Stage two** – If this is not successful, you may make a formal complaint to the Deputy Principal which will then be investigated
- Stage three** – If you are still dissatisfied, the Principal can be asked to consider your complaint on the basis of the stage two investigation. If he/she considers that there are sufficient grounds for an appeal against the outcome of the investigation, he/she will arrange for a panel of three trustees to be convened to hear the appeal.

The way in which each of the three stages work is set out in detail below:

#### **Stage one**

Whenever possible, the College will try to deal with your complaint fairly, quickly and informally. In the first instance, you should normally talk to the following:

- If you are a student at the College, your personal tutor or the relevant subject teacher. In the event that you do not consider it appropriate to approach your personal tutor or the relevant subject teacher for any reason, then you should approach the Deputy Principal.
- If you are not a student, then your complaint should be addressed directly to the Deputy Principal.

If the relevant person is unable to resolve your complaint informally, he/she will write to you on behalf of the College setting out his/her understanding of your complaint and explaining why he/she is unable to resolve it. At the same time, he/she will notify you of the formal complaints procedure (stage two).

#### **Stage two**

If you wish to take your complaint to the next formal stage, you will be asked to explain your complaint in writing. This should be addressed to the Deputy Principal.

The Deputy Principal will normally write to you within five working days of receiving your written complaint to set out their understanding of the nature of your complaint, to clarify any issues and to ask if you wish to submit any further information. You will normally be asked to respond within a further 10 working days.

The Deputy Principal will then investigate your complaint or appoint a representative to do so.

The College will normally aim to let you have the results of the investigation within 25 working days of receiving your original written complaint. If the investigation is to take more than 25 working days you will be informed.

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If the complaint involves the Principal:

- a) Refer your complaint to the clerk to the Trustees who will pass it to the chair of Trustees.
- b) The chair of Trustees will attempt to resolve the complaint. The decision will be reported to the clerk who will log the response in the College's complaints register.
- c) If the complaint is not resolved by the chair of Trustees, he/she will decide whether to convene a committee of Trustees to investigate the complaint. In this situation, as above, the committee will aim to let you have the results of the investigation within 25 working days.

### Stage three

If you are still dissatisfied at the end of the stage two investigation, the matter can be referred to the Principal. He/she will review your written statements and the College's response to these. He/she may make further enquiries to clarify any particular points or issues.

If he/she considers that there are sufficient grounds for an appeal against the outcome of the stage two investigation, he/she will arrange for a panel of three Trustees to hear your appeal. The complaints panel procedure will then apply and you will be provided with a copy of this.

Stage three is the final stage of the College's complaints procedure.

Were changes made to the Policy when received? If YES complete the Partial Equality Analysis table.

Questions for all Policies Is it likely that the Policy Revision could have a negative impact:-		Please Tick Box	
		YES	NO
1.	On minority ethnic groups?		X
2.	Due to gender?		X
3.	Due to disability?		X
4.	Due to sexual orientation?		X
5.	Due to their religious beliefs (or none)?		X
6.	On people due to them being transgender or transsexual?		X
Additional questions for Policies relating to Staff Is it likely that the Policy Revision could have a negative impact:-			
7.	On people due to their age?		X
8.	On people due to their marital or civil partnership status?		X
9.	On people with dependants/caring responsibilities?		X
Date of Review	October 2020	Did you make changes?	X

If YES please speak with The Assistant Principal as a full Equality Analysis may be required.

NRA/Complaints Procedure: Oct 2020  
Last Reviewed: Oct 2020  
Next Review: Oct 2023