



Bexhill 6th Form College

COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: PG5

Reviewed & Approved by Personnel Committee: **NOVEMBER 2016**
Approved by Corporation: **DECEMBER 2016**

COMPLAINTS POLICY



Bexhill 6th Form College

Bexhill College is committed to handling all complaints in a serious and constructive manner. Complaints can be a positive factor in our efforts to improve the quality of our provision. The Complaints Policy is published every year in the College Student handbook and referred to in the introduction in the parent handbook.

WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG

If you feel that the College has let you down in any way please let us know. We need to understand where we have gone wrong if we are to do anything about it. The first step for students or parents would be to talk to their son or daughters Head or Deputy Head of Section or Vice Principal who will attempt to resolve issues. If they are not satisfied with the outcome, they may consider making a formal written complaint. The College will then respond to this as set out below.

The College's Mission and purpose in all aspects of its activity is to strive for excellence and achieve high standards. The College's aim is, therefore, to have few, or no complaints about any aspects of its activity. Where complaints do arise, the College will always:

- Express regret that the complainant feels they have cause to complain.
- Attempt to resolve the complaint promptly, informally and fairly.
- Take the complaint seriously.
- Ensure that the complainant is kept fully informed of the procedure and the outcome of their complaint.
- Ensure that the complainant is aware of procedures to help them progress their complaint.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints about College activity can come from any source. The main likely sources of complaints however will be:-

- Students – concerning aspects of their programme of study, the resourcing, delivery and final outcome. (The appeals procedure against final grades will remain as outlined in subject handbooks).
- Parents – concerning aspects of the organisation of their son or daughter's programme of study, the resourcing, delivery and final outcome.
- Members of the Public – concerning the impact of the operation of the College on the locality through, for example, student behaviour or traffic management.

In addition, complaints may concern a perceived failure of the College to deliver its Mission or fulfil expectations; aspects of employee behaviour; the conduct or outcome of examinations; the failure of the College to conform to its own policies, as well as other issues.

In all cases the same procedure and time-scales should operate, although the complaints and complainants will vary widely.

1. If the complainant wishes to proceed, they should be given a copy of this procedure and asked to make their complaint in writing to the Principal, if they have not done so already.
2. The Principal will then appoint a senior member of staff (referred to as “the Investigator”) to investigate the complaint and produce a report on findings. They will respond to the complainant within twenty – thirty working days. The response should be in writing and should always include regret for the fact that the complainant has found it necessary to complain. The written response will be from the person appointed to investigate the complaint.
3. At this stage, many complaints will be resolved. If the complainant feels that a resolution has not been achieved, they may seek to present their case to an Appeal Panel. If the complainant wishes to do this, they must state their wish to appeal in writing and give the reasons why the written response is unsatisfactory. They must also state what they seek from the Appeal Panel. This should be sent to the Principal.
4. The Appeal Panel will meet within ten working days of the receipt of the above. The panel will consist of the Principal, one other member of SLT excluding the Investigator and one other senior staff member or a member of the Corporation. The decision of the panel is final. The complainant will be informed of the right to raise procedural complaint with the appropriate body where such an avenue exists.

CONDUCT OF THE APPEAL

1. The conduct of the appeal should be as friendly as possible within a formal framework.
2. The complainant will have received appropriate notice, in writing, of the time of the Appeal Panel and will have been invited to attend. The complainant may be accompanied by one other person if they wish. A translation service will be made available where complainant or the Chair feels it appropriate.
3. The complainant will present their appeal, and the reasons for their dissatisfaction with the outcome, to the panel within 10 working days of receiving the outcome. They are not required to make this presentation in writing. The panel may ask questions.
4. The senior member of staff who investigated the complaint will present the College response. This could be:
 - The College feels the complaint to be unfounded or frivolous.
 - The College feels everything possible has been done to resolve the complaint.The panel may ask questions.
5. Both the complainant and the Investigator will withdraw, and the Appeal Panel will notify the results of their conclusions to the complainant, in writing, within three working days.
6. The Appeal Panel should not normally sit for a longer period than thirty minutes, and should aim to respond positively to the complainant throughout.

NOTE

It is important that a written record is kept throughout so the facts can be established promptly before recollections fade or distort. Statements should be taken from individuals who become part of the investigation. All documentation should be regarded as confidential by all parties throughout, and following the investigation (and for appeal if appropriate) will be held centrally by the Principal's Office. A complaint is logged by the Principal's office, the complainant is contacted with details of who is dealing with the complaint and provided with a copy of the Complaint's Policy (PG5). The Strategic Planning, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee are provided annually with details of complaints.

If the Principal responds to a complaint, the Principal will appoint another Senior Staff member from the Colleges Senior Leadership Team to lead the Appeal Panel.