

Name of Policy

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Purposes

To detail the procedures to be followed when a complaint is received

Responsibility of / Job Title

Assistant Principal Quality

Equality Assessment By Whom

Assistant Principal Quality

Date

05/2022

Version

4

Date of next review (month & year)

06/2025

Approved by

SMT

Date

April 2022

Corporation

5th July 2022

Related policies or procedures or parent policy if applicable

Academic Appeals Procedure
FE Refund Policy
HE Refund and Compensation Policy

Groups/bodies consulted in the development of the policy

OIA
Awarding Bodies

To be published on College website

Yes

To be published on Student Hub

Yes

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Stages of complaint

Early resolution

This is the preferred stage of resolution where the response is swift and given at a local level and is mutually agreed by the staff member approached and complainant.

Formal resolution

If early resolution is not possible due to the nature or seriousness of the complaint or the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response the formal stage of the process will begin. The Assistant Principal - of Quality will manage the formal process and will act on behalf of the complainant to ensure the procedure is followed at all times. The Assistant Principal Quality will also ensure any responses sent to the complainant satisfy this policy. If the complaint is regarding the Assistant Principal Quality it will be investigated by the Deputy Principal

Frivolous or Vexatious complaints

If a complaint is considered to be frivolous or vexatious the College will have the right to terminate consideration of the complaint and associated procedures. In such cases the College will write to the learner concerned and explain why termination of procedures is appropriate. The College will consider a complaint to be frivolous or vexatious if:

- complaints are obsessive, harassing or repetitive
- insistence on pursuing non-meritorious complaints and or unrealistic outcomes occurs
- insistence on pursuing what may be unmeritorious complaint in an unreasonable manner occurs
- complaints are designed to cause disruption
- demands for redress without purpose or value occur

Anonymous complaints

Complaints sent without names and contact details will not be investigated further but will be filed by the Assistant Principal Quality

Support for learners wishing to make a complaint

Learners should be directed to support services available for example Progress Coaches or who could provide independent advice on how to access systems or procedures to assist the learner with their concerns or documenting a complaint.

All procedures should be available in accessible formats and a case by case assessment should take place for each learner to ensure they have fair access to procedures. Records of any adjustments made to support the complainant will be kept and considered good practice. This assessment will be the responsibility of the Assistant Principal Quality.

Learners will be advised of the need to complete name and contact details with all complaints to allow the College the opportunity to investigate and feedback in full.

Higher Education Complaints

The College complies with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and will issue all HE complainants with information on how to access support from the OIA when appealing a final response regarding HE provision at Macclesfield College if all College procedures have been exhausted.

Recording complaints

Complaint records should be sufficient and proportionate in detail, allowing identification of the issues and training requirement where necessary. The records will be maintained and stored by the Assistant Principal - Quality.

Learning and development from complaints

At the completion of a complaint all parties should understand the findings of the investigation and why decision(s) have been made.

The Assistant Principal Quality will ensure there is a procedure in place to act on any issues identified. These procedures should facilitate:

- use of data to identify root cause of complaints
- action to reduce the chance of re-occurrence of problems
- recording of corrective actions
- systematic review of complaints to improve performance and enrich self-assessment
- Analysis and reporting should allow patterns / trends to be identified.

Reports will be presented to the Senior Management team termly and to Corporation annually within the equality and diversity report. The level of detail provided in the reports will be proportionate to the committees remit. Third party organisations and Awarding Bodies will receive complaint reports as per their procedural requirements.

Complaints accountability

Complaints can be made to any member of staff. All staff members will be made aware of the Complaints Procedure and how to handle them at the early resolution stage. If this informal stage cannot resolve the issue staff will need to be aware of the appropriate referral route. The College's policy is to use informal resolution where possible to avoid escalation.

Complaints outcomes

All complainants will receive communication detailing the outcome of any investigations and what action, if any, the College is taking to rectify the situation.

Appeals Procedure

In the event of the complaint not being resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, they have the right to appeal. This should be in writing to the Deputy Principal within 5 days of the response, detailing the reasons for the appeal. A decision will be made within 10 working days and they will be notified of the outcome and reasons.



