



Newbury College

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Summary available:	NO		

Complaints Policy and Procedure 2016/17 – 2019/20

(For Students and Members of the Public)

This document can be made available in other formats,
on request

Complaints Policy and Procedure

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Newbury College is committed to providing a high quality service for all its students, clients and the community. Its policy is to welcome and to try to satisfy complaints and observations from all who use the College and to use the information to improve the services it offers.
- 1.2 The College will deal with legitimate complaints in a fair, prompt and objective manner. Complaints will be handled without recrimination and students and members of the public will not be disadvantaged by raising a complaint. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted. All information will be kept in strict confidence and shared only on a need-to-know basis. College staff are expected to respond positively to complaints and to alert students or members of the public to the Complaints Procedure.
- 1.3 The College will be fair in its treatment of all those who complain irrespective of all protected characteristics (See Single Equality Duty Policy).
- 1.4 Complaints will be dealt with promptly and constructively. The outcomes of any complaint will be shared with the complainant and any College staff involved. Complaints made which, on investigation, turn out to be malicious, may result in disciplinary or other further action.
- 1.5 If the complaint is about a course or a service offered by the College, the manager of the area concerned will be the complaints officer deliberating on the complaint unless the complaint is about that manager. The Deputy Principal will deal with all appeals against the outcomes of complaints unless that complaint involves the Deputy Principal in which case the appeal will be heard by another senior manager.
- 1.6 The Deputy Principal has overall responsibility for the Complaints Procedure and may nominate another person to investigate a complaint if there is a conflict of interest between being the manager of an area and being the complaints officer investigating the complaint as outlined in 1.5 above.
- 1.7 If the complaint is against the Principal or a member of the SMT, then the Complaints Officer will be either the Principal if not the subject of the complaint or the Chair of the Audit Committee, the Safeguarding Governor, Governor overseeing E&D or Staff Governor of the Corporation.

2 Scope of Complaints Procedure

- 2.1 The Procedure deals with complaints arising from:
- The quality of the provision of academic services or training including teaching, course content, tutoring and student support
 - Incorrect or misleading information about services provided by the College
 - The quality of support services provided by the College including administration of fees and grants, enrolment and examination registration
 - Unacceptable behaviour by College staff
- 2.2 Separate procedures exist for:
- Public interest disclosure (Whistleblowing)
 - Student discipline
 - Academic assessment appeals
- 2.3 Any incidents that may be related to radicalisation must be reported to the Safeguarding Team and the Principal or Deputy Principal even if, subsequently, it is identified as a false alarm.

3 How to complain

- 3.1 The Student Charter in the student handbook prompts guidance from Course Leaders as to how comments and complaints may be made and how to contact the Complaints Officer for advice. All students will receive a copy of the Charter at Induction and further copies will be posted around the College.
- 3.2 The Staff Handbook refers to policies and procedures and new staff are informed of this Complaints Procedure during their induction programme.
- 3.3 The Additional Learning Support (ALS) Team Leader will ensure that the Complaints Procedure and Complaint forms are available from Reception, Information Services, the LRC and IT Centres. It is available in other forms on request from Information Services.
- 3.4 The Complaints Procedure and Complaint form is accessible through the external web site.
- 3.5 If a complainant writes directly to the Principal or the Deputy Principal, (either directly or via their PA) the complaint will be forwarded to the Complaints Officer, as per section 5 of this document. The Principal and Deputy Principal cannot be involved at this stage with the investigation of the complaint. An acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant.

NB Very serious complaints, for example those that involve the Police, will be responded to in writing by the Learner Services Manager, Deputy Principal or the Principal as appropriate.

4 Support for those involved in a complaint

Support, if required, is available for all those involved in a complaint:

- Representation: parent, guardian, friend, supporter: ALS Team Leader
- Help with completing the Complaint Form: ALS Team Leader
- Guidance in understanding the procedure: ALS Team Leader
- Support during the procedure: College counsellor, ALS Team Leader

If any further help is needed, Information Services should be contacted.

5 Complaint Procedure

Stage 1: Informal resolution of complaints

- 5.1 Most complaints should be able to be resolved immediately with discussion between the complainant and the appropriate member of staff. The complaint must be made orally or in writing and the manager receiving the complaint should make a response within 10 working days, orally or in writing. It is expected that staff are tactful and courteous in dealing with a complaint. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response received, they should then be guided to using the formal procedure.
- 5.2 If a complaint is raised with the expectation of a refund or partial refund, the student or member of the public must make that clear at the time of raising the complaint. The student or member of the public will then be notified of the College's Refunds Policy.

Stage 2: Formal procedure

- 5.3 A formal complaint should be made in writing within 15 working days of an incident or action from which the complaint arises, or from the date when the complainant received a written reply to an informal complaint (5.1 above). In exceptional circumstances, a longer period will be considered. The complaint should be sent to the PA of the Principal and the Deputy Principal as in 3.5 above and will be logged. The complaint will be acknowledged in writing to the complainant within 5 working days.
- 5.4 The Complaints Officer or an independent investigator will acknowledge the complaint and carry out an assessment of the complaint within 5 working days. More serious or unusual complaints or complaints that may represent a conflict of interest, will be investigated by an alternative Complaints Officer appointed by the College.
- 5.5 The Complaints Officer will carry out an investigation of the complaint and may interview the complainant; the respondent; witnesses to the matter or events and anyone they believe may have a role in establishing or disproving the complaint, as necessary. They will prepare a summary report within 10 working days of the assessment.

- 5.6 The Complaints Officer will record the outcome of the complaint in the Register of Complaints and either arrange a meeting to deliver the outcome or notify all those involved in writing as appropriate. All outcomes will be confirmed in writing to all those involved.
- 5.7 If the complaint involves a student, they will be offered the support of the Learner Services Manager as set out in 4 above. All students will be encouraged to bring a supporter to the interview. Vulnerable Adults and those under 16 years of age must have the support of their care worker, or a person of their choice, who can act as their advocate and the Principal must be informed.
- 5.8 If the complaint involves the Principal, the investigator (who will be the Chair of the Audit Committee or equivalent, (see section 1.7) will report the outcome of their investigation to the Chair of the Corporation.
- 5.9 A formal complaint should be resolved within 25 working days of the receipt of the original formal complaint. If it appears that a decision will not be reached within the due period, those involved will be advised of the need for a longer period.

N.B. The Principal of the College has the right to assign different post holders to those stated above to ensure that the complainant gets a fair consideration of their complaint.

6 The Appeals Procedure

- 6.1 Either the complainant or the respondent may appeal in writing, stating detailed reasons for their appeal to the Deputy Principal within 5 working days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of the formal complaint. The appeal will be acknowledged within 5 working days and the Deputy Principal will review and notify the final decision in writing to all those involved within 20 working days of receiving the appeal.
- 6.2 If the complainant is not happy with the conduct of the appeal, the complaint can be taken further to the Principal of the College, who will investigate the conduct of the Deputy Principal in investigating the appeal. This would be to review the performance of the Deputy Principal and not the appeal decision.
- 6.3 If the College does not resolve the appeal to the complainant's satisfaction, then they should contact:

For 19+ students
Education and Skills Funding Agency or Complaints Team
 Cheylesmore House
 Quinton Road
 Coventry
 CV1 2WT

For under 19 students
Education and Skills Funding Agency
 Earlsdon Park
 53-55 Butts Road
 Coventry
 CV1 3BH

7 Monitoring the Procedure

- 7.1 It is essential that complaints are resolved promptly. The Complaints Officer will check the Register of Complaints every two weeks to identify outstanding complaints and ensure that the procedure follows the set time limits.
- 7.2 The Complaints Officer will present a schedule of complaints received and outcomes to the College Management Team on a termly basis. The Deputy Principal or the Teaching and Quality Manager will produce an annual report for the Corporation, based on the Register of Complaints analysis, covering the following items:
- Number of complaints of each type
 - Time taken to process complaints
 - List of outstanding complaints
 - Outcomes to complaints
 - Appeals made and results of appeals
 - Analysis of complaints and outcomes by certain protected characteristics.
- 7.3 The Deputy Principal will hold a record of all complaints for 2 years for audit purposes.

8 Complaint Procedure – Summary Table

Complaint stages	Resolved	Not resolved
<p>Stage 1: Informal resolution</p> <p>An informal discussion between the complainant and the appropriate member of staff takes place</p>	Feedback to complainant	If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response received, s/he should then be guided to Stage 2
<p>Stage 2: Formal procedure</p> <p>A Complaints as set out in 1 above) is assigned to investigate the complaint</p>	Feedback to complainant	If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response received, s/he should then be guided to Stage 3 of the procedure
<p>Stage 3: Appeal procedure</p> <p>The Deputy Principal or a designated Appeals Officer is assigned to investigate the complaint.</p>	Feedback to complainant <i>N.B. The outcome of the appeal is final.</i>	If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response received, s/he should take the matter to external agencies (see 6.1 and 6.2)
<p>Stage 4: Conduct of the Appeal</p> <p>If the complainant is not happy with the conduct of the appeal, the complaint can be taken further to the Principal of the College</p>	The Principal will feedback on the performance of the Deputy Principal in considering the appeal and not the appeal decision. If the Principal finds the process was not followed as per the College procedure, then a new complaints officer will be assigned and stage 2 will be re-started.	

N.B. In the case of appeals, the Principal of the College has the right to assign different post holders to those stated above to ensure that the complainant gets a fair consideration of their complaint.

Date: February 2012

Reviewed: February 2014 (minor amendments only), July 16 (minor update), March 17

Next Review: February 2020

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