

## **PETER SYMONDS COLLEGE**

### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Date Reviewed by SMT:	30 March 2021
Date Approved by Governors:	5 July 2021
Member of Staff Responsible:	Deputy Principal (Welfare & Progression)
Next Review Date:	June 2022

The College has a policy of continual improvement and would wish to hear complaints about any of its services, which do not meet its own high standards. Students following a Higher Education course at AHed should refer to their student handbook or the AHed website for full HE grievance and complaints procedures.

The College Complaints Procedure for students operates in three stages:

#### **Stage One**

A complainant who is not satisfied with any of the services provided by the College or feels he/she has been treated unfairly should first discuss the matter with their teacher, Head of Subject, personal/course tutor, Senior Tutor, Director of Curriculum & Support/Adult & Higher Education Division Curriculum Head, or Head of Boarding. It should usually be possible to resolve the matter quickly and informally.

#### **Stage Two**

If concerns are not resolved informally then the complainant has the right to make a formal complaint in writing by emailing [principal@psc.ac.uk](mailto:principal@psc.ac.uk) The complaint will be delegated to an appropriate member of staff for investigation and response. The complaint will be acknowledged and the complainant will be informed of which member of staff is investigating the complaint.

The complaint will usually be delegated to the Deputy Principal (Welfare & Progression) for 16-19 students or to the Director of Adult & Higher Education for adult students but may be delegated to another appropriate member of staff. They will take all complaints seriously and will always try to seek a resolution. This may involve talking with all parties concerned. The College aims to deal with all complaints within five working term time days of the complaint being received, but it is recognised that in complex situations it may take longer. The College will inform the complainant in writing (most usually by email) of the outcome of their complaint.

#### **Stage Three**

In the case of a complainant not being satisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint, then the matter will be referred to the Principal. The complainant should write to the Principal within five working term time days of the receipt of the outcome of the complaint. They should set out the outcome to their formal complaint, as well as the reasons why they are not satisfied with that outcome.

The Principal will decide how to proceed, depending on the nature of the original complaint and the reason(s) why the complainant feels it has not been resolved at stages 1 and 2. The Principal may review the situation and respond to the complainant or may decide to convene a panel to review the complaint. A panel will usually be made up of three people, with its composition depending on the nature of the complaint. The complainant and any others invited to attend a panel meeting will be informed five working term time days beforehand who is on the panel and how the panel meeting will operate.

Any recommendations or decisions made by the Principal or a panel shall be final.

*This procedure is designed for use by students. The College is aware that parents may prefer to complain directly to the Principal or another senior member of staff, in which case they should do so in writing. Such direct correspondence will be treated as far as possible as being within Stage 2 of the procedure. If, however, the complaint has been dealt with at that stage by the Principal, any further complaint will be directed to a Complaints Panel (Stage 3). A complaint in writing received from a parent may be passed to another member of staff to be dealt with as a Stage 1 complaint, depending on the nature of the complaint.*

In the event of a formal complaint from a student or parent being about the actions of the Principal, this should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body who, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, will decide how to proceed. For example, there may be a review of the situation by the Chair of Governors or the Chair may decide to convene a panel to review the complaint. A panel will usually be made up of three people, with its composition depending on the nature of the complaint. The complainant and any others invited to attend a panel meeting will be informed five working term time days beforehand who is on the panel and how the panel meeting will operate.

Any recommendations or decisions made by the Chair of Governors or a panel shall be final.

### **Timescales**

Timescales for the College to respond to a complaint at stages 2 and 3 are set out above. Please note that the College will not normally deal with complaints made more than three months after the decision/action the complaint relates to occurred.

### **Scope**

In responding to a complaint at stages 2 and 3, the College reserves the right not to process a complaint which is considered to be disproportionate to the matter concerned. Also, the College reserves the right not to process complaints that are considered vexatious or malicious.

If it has not been possible to resolve a complaint through the College's Complaints Procedure, the complainant can refer the procedure to our funding body, the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). For Higher Education provision, this is the Higher Education Funding Council for England (Office for Students). Higher Education students also have recourse to the validation

institution's complaints policy and procedures, and ultimately the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, once the College's complaints procedure is exhausted.

Concerns regarding grades awarded as part of the 2021 Teacher Assessed Grades process do not fall under the scope of the Complaints Procedure. All concerns in this context must be raised using the arrangements for appeals. If at the close of the appeals process, a student or parent feels they have a complaint about the way they were treated by the College during the appeals process, the Complaints Procedure can be used. Such a complaint can only focus on the way a student or parent was treated, and does not extend to any reconsideration of the grade awarded or the outcomes of the appeal.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Formal complaints are logged and form the basis of an annual monitoring report to the Senior Management Team and Governing Body. This policy is reviewed annually.

*This Complaints Policy is available in alternative formats on request by contacting the Student Services department.*

*When this policy was reviewed, consideration was given to equality and diversity in the context of the 2010 Equality Act and any necessary updates agreed.*

### Linked Policies

- Admissions Policy for Students
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedures - Students
- Progress Monitoring and Support Policy for 16-19 Students
- Prevention of Bullying and Harassment (Students)
- Reviews of Marking - Centre Assessed Marks
- Appeals Against Assessment
- Equality and Diversity Policy for Students