



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

At Esher 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 in this leaflet tells you how to go about doing this.

Please contact us if you need this leaflet in Braille, large print, audio tape or another language on 020 8398 0291.

Key principles

1. The College aims to provide an excellent service for both students and the community.
2. Complaints will be dealt with promptly and fairly on the basis of this Procedure.
3. The College will seek to learn from complaints found to have been valid and may make changes to operating procedures and practices where appropriate.
4. In dealing with complaints the College will have regard to its commitment to promote inclusivity, tolerance and respect for others and to the value it places on diversity.

Scope of the Procedure

The College will investigate complaints that include the following areas:

- the quality and management of learning provision;
- financial irregularity
- undue delay or non-compliance with published procedures
- poor administration
- equality and diversity issues
- health and safety concerns
- confidentiality

Save that the College will not be able to investigate complaints about policies agreed by the Governing Body of the College. Other areas excluded from this procedure are:

- examination results or curriculum content where a more appropriate form of redress would be the examining body or the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority;
- individual employment issues which are the subject of separate procedures;
- contractual disputes;
- matters that are the subject of legal action.

The College reserves the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious.

The 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 and you make a formal complaint to the Principal she/he will arrange for your complaint to be investigated.

Stage three - if you are still dissatisfied the Chair of the Governing Body will be asked to consider your complaint on the basis of the Stage two investigation. If she/he considers that there are sufficient grounds for an appeal against the outcome of the investigation, she/he will arrange for a panel of three Governors 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

Wherever 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 Tutor or Team Leader. In the event that you do not consider it appropriate to approach your Tutor or Team Leader for any reason, then their line manager. If in doubt as to who this is, enquire at Reception.
- If you are not a student contact, in the first instance, the Principal's P.A.

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

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 Principal.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will normally write to you within 5 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 Principal will appoint an appropriate member of staff to investigate your complaint and you will be told who this is.

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

Stage 3

If you are still dissatisfied at the end of the Stage two investigation, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Governing Body. She/he will review your written statements and the College's response to these. She/he may make further enquiries to clarify any particular points or issues.

If she/he considers that there are sufficient grounds for an appeal against the outcome of the Stage two investigation, she/he will arrange for a panel of three governors 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. If you are still not happy, you can contact Surrey County Council. The address is:

East Surrey Partnership Manager
Surrey County council
Quadrant Court
35 Guildford Road
Woking
Surrey GU22 7QQ

Approved by the Corporation July 2005