

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Introduction

The Complaints Policy sets out the College's commitment to respond to complaints promptly, vigorously and fairly. The benefits of having an easy to follow, well supported and understood complaints handling procedure are recognised by the College. Where any of the College services fall short of acceptable standards the College will endeavour to rectify the failing and remove any resulting disadvantage experienced by the complainant. The College will use the outcomes from complaint investigations to improve the quality of its services where this is applicable.

2. Scope

The Complaints Policy and Complaints Handling Procedure apply in all circumstances where a student, applicant, employer, service provider or member of the public wish to complain about the service they have received from the College, or the behaviour of any individual associated with the College.

Complaints may be about curricular or support functions and services.

A complaint may be received in person, in writing or in any electronic format.

Complaints should state what has gone wrong and what the complainant would like to happen to put it right. On receipt of a complaint the College will determine the seriousness of the complaint and implement the appropriate process from the Complaints Handling Procedure.

3. Key Principles

The College endeavours to provide a high-quality service to all its learners and to be fair and robust in its learner recruitment processes. It provides a wide range of services to support learners in being successful in their chosen qualification and in supporting employers to develop their workforces. It recognises that in responding to complaints it can improve its service and improve the satisfaction and success of its learners.

The College aims to deal with complaints swiftly and effectively. Most complaints can be dealt with satisfactorily by frontline staff whether they can be from curricular or support services. For more serious or complex complaints, the College has in place investigating and reporting procedures detailed in the Complaints Handling Procedure. Less serious Frontline Complaints will be investigated and concluded within 5 working days. More serious Level 2 complaints will require more detailed investigation and reporting and will be concluded within 20 working days. The Principal will appoint an investigating officer or other appropriate person.

The College will support individuals or organisations wishing to complain about an aspect of its service so that it can understand the nature of the complaint and what might need to be done if a service is substandard or failing. This may include involving internal advocacy services such as the Newbattle Abbey College Student Association or external support e.g. advocacy services to assist the complainant.

The Board and Senior Management Team are committed to a fair and robust Complaints Handling Procedure and are regularly updated on complaints' outcomes and trends.

Where a complaint involves the alleged misconduct of a member of staff or learner then the investigation may also lead to separate action under the staff or student disciplinary procedures.

The College will monitor and record all complaints, subsequent investigations, and actions. It will analyse trends and use these to inform development planning.

4. Responsibilities

The Board approve this policy and are responsible for monitoring trends in complaints and addressing any complaints relating to governance issues.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the College's Complaints Policy meets statutory requirements and national guidance.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for monitoring ongoing complaints and agreeing any necessary action and redress to resolve a complaint.

The Deputy Principal is the policy approver and responsible for oversight of application of the policy and procedure including institutional learning from complaints.

The Deputy Principal or Director of Operations are responsible for the initiation of any investigations of Level 2 complaints and the monitoring of investigations and reporting activity.

If the Deputy Principal or Director of Operations is the subject of the complaint or if either is absent for an extended period, then the Principal assumes these responsibilities.

College Managers will monitor complaints within their own areas of responsibility and will usually act as investigating officers for Level 2 complaints.

All frontline staff, including lecturers, will receive and recognise complaints, will identify and refer on serious complaints and will respond to less serious complaints by following the Complaints Handling Procedure.

The Senior Administrator will record complaints in the College's complaints database.

5. Related Documents

Internal

- Complaints Handling Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Employee Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Freedom of Information Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Admission Policy
- Student Appeal Procedure

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant College policies, procedures and guidance documents, whether specifically listed above or subsequently published or amended.

The College reserves the right to update, introduce, or revise policies and procedures from time to time.

Compliance with the most current versions of applicable policies and procedures, as published, is expected.

Title:	Complaints Policy
Lead Officer:	DPO/Senior Administrator
Date last reviewed	July 2024
Next Review date:	July 2027
Approved By:	Board
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