



Complaints Procedure

Process

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Introduction

St Mary's College consider complaints as an opportunity to receive valuable feedback. A complaint enables St Mary's College to reflect, analyse and improve our service. We aim to ensure that all complaints are treated seriously and followed up in a sensitive manner.

Minimum standards include:

- To respond quickly and sensitively to any query, concern or complaint.
- To investigate a complaint thoroughly and without bias
- To provide the complainant with a prompt written response to the investigation findings
- To provide a means of appeal to the complainant
- To maintain records and provide reports of complaints for senior managers and College Committees

Associated Policies, Procedures and Protocols:

- Equality Policy & Procedures
- Grievance Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy & Procedures
- Employee Handbook

Scope:

The Complaints Procedure applies to all customers, contractors, employees, governors, students and visitors.

Specific accountabilities of parties are:

- The Principal holds ultimate accountability to ensure all complaints receive investigation, response and resolution
- The Vice Principal: Curriculum, Quality, Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Recruitment has responsibility for the application monitoring and revision of these procedures
- Senior Leaders are responsible for investigating complaints
- Corporation are responsible for approving the procedures and receiving an annual report of complaints

Procedure:

1. Queries and Concerns:

1.0 Matters of concern can be raised informally with the person who is most likely to be able to help, e.g. a teacher, tutor, member of the Wellbeing Team or Manager.

A query or concern can be raised to Joy Pipping, PA to the Principal/CEO who will ensure that matter is directed to the right person

2. Formal Complaints:

2.0 Complaints (expressions of dissatisfaction) may only concern actions or lack of action by St Mary's College or individuals with reference to duties or responsibilities, as defined by relevant legislation, regulations and contractual agreements.

2.1 Formal complaints must be made in writing and addressed to:

St Mary's College Principal & CEO
St Mary's College
Shear Brow
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB1 8DX

2.2 The complainant will be expected to state clearly the nature of the complaint and, if appropriate, provide copies of any related documentation.

2.3 The formal complaints procedure should be followed where a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a review of Centre assessed marking. This only applies prior to external moderation.

2.4 The Principal will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint without unreasonable delay, ideally within 3 working days
- Nominate a member of senior management (Executive) Team to investigate the complaint. In case of a complaint against a member of Senior Management, the investigation will be carried out by the Vice Principal: Curriculum, Quality, Teaching, Learning, Assessment, and Recruitment A complaint against a Vice Principal or Assistant Principal will be investigated by the Director of Finance (See Appendix).
- Endeavour to provide a written response to the complaint within 10 working days and if this is not possible the Principal will provide the complainant with an interim statement

3. Complaints Against Senior Post-Holders

3.1 In the case of a Senior Post-Holder, the Human Resources Officer will investigate the complaint and report back their findings to a panel with two (non-staff) Governor representatives. The Human Resources Officer will give a recommendation to the panel.

Their recommendation may be one of the following:

- That the complaint should be upheld and action is recommended which may include, as appropriate, disciplinary action.
- That some elements of the complaint are upheld and some elements are not
- That the complaint is not upheld. Should the Human Resources Officer determine that the complaint was raised vexatiously, frivolously or maliciously, he/she may initiate a disciplinary investigation into the action of the employee who has raised the complaint

3.2 The Senior Human Resources Officer will inform the Senior Post-Holder of the decision (in writing) and the right of appeal, normally within twenty working days of the final complaint meeting.

3.3 Where a complaint is not fully upheld the Senior Post-Holder may appeal in accordance with this procedure. The decision will be confirmed in writing alongside the Right to Appeal. Any appeal will be heard by the Chair of Governors.

4. Appeal:

4.0 The operation of this Procedure does not remove the right of appeal. Appeals should be made to the Principal or, where the Principal has investigated the original complaint to the Clerk to the Corporation

4.1 The Principal or Clerk to the Corporation will acknowledge receipt of the complaint without unreasonable delay, ideally within 3 working days.

4.2 Upon further investigation the Principal or Clerk to the Corporation will endeavour to provide a written response to the continued concern within 10 working days.

4.3 If the above does not satisfactorily resolve the complaint the complainant may wish to approach those relevant bodies external to St Mary's College such as the Department for Education (DfE).

Appendix:
Formal Resolution

Decisions in relation to hearing formal complaints will be taken by the relevant member of the Senior Team or HR as illustrated below:

| Complaint Against | Complaint Heard By | Appeal Heard By |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Senior Post Holder | HR and two (non-staff) Governors | Chair of Governors |
| Vice Principal or Assistant Principal | Director of Finance | Principal |
| Employees | Vice Principal or Assistant Principal | Principal |