



THE SIXTH FORM COLLEGES TRUST

# COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Sixth Form Colleges Trust aims to offer the highest standards of teaching and learning, advice and care. We are committed to continuous improvement and listen carefully to the views of our students, their parents and others.
- 1.2. We recognise that from time to time, an individual may feel that the institution has fallen short of these high standards. When concerns or issues arise, we will treat them seriously, respond promptly, and investigate fully so as to resolve the matter in a timely and sensitive way.
- 1.3. We understand too that complaints can be an important source of feedback. Complaints will be monitored and analysed and we will use this feedback to help us to learn and improve our work.
- 1.4. This policy sets out the process by which complaints will be handled and is designed to ensure a fair, consistent, and open approach.
- 1.5. The Sixth Form Colleges Trust expects that most concerns or complaints can be resolved informally and guarantees to treat all concerns seriously whether raised informally or formally.
- 1.6. This complaints process can be used by students, parents/carers, or members of the public. Concerns raised by staff in the capacity of employees will usually be addressed through the line management process and/or other relevant policies.
- 1.7. The timeframes referred to in this policy are our usual timeframes and the Trust will seek to adhere to these timeframes where possible.
- 1.8. Reasonable adjustments will be made to this procedure where required to ensure that all complainants can access and complete this complaints procedure.
- 1.9. We will ensure we publicise this policy and make it available on the Trust website and as a linked document from each college website.

## **2. Policy Scope**

- 2.1. This policy applies to concerns and complaints relating to the Colleges, College Staff and Governors, the Trust's central operations, central staff and Trustees.
- 2.2. Part 1 of this Complaints policy applies only to complaints made by students, parents or carers of current enrolled students within the Trust. However, the Trust wishes to work closely with other members of the local community and will deal with their concerns and complaints as set out in Part 2.
- 2.3. It does not apply to complaints about the following areas which have specific policies and procedures. (See Appendix A)
  - admissions
  - exclusions
  - Staff grievance, capability or disciplinary
  - Whistleblowing complaints

- 2.4. The Trust will not investigate complaints about services provided by other providers who may use College premises or facilities. These organisations will have their own complaints procedures and should be contacted directly.
- 2.5. If an anonymous complaint is made, the College/Trust will not be in a position to notify the complainant of the outcome of any investigation or action taken. Anonymity also means the College/Trust may have difficulty in investigating matters raised in the complaint/concern. Due consideration will be given to the apparent seriousness and credibility of the issues raised in the complaint, as part of any investigation.

### **3. What is a Complaint?**

- 3.1. The Trust takes very seriously any concern or complaint about the quality of education and support, other services we provide or about the conduct of our staff. We believe that tackling concerns at the earliest possible stage allows us to address any issues promptly, to maintain positive relationships, enhance learning and prevent issues from escalating.
- 3.2. A **concern** is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”. It is expected that concerns will be addressed via the informal process outlined in this policy.
- 3.3. A **complaint** is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”.
- 3.4. The Trust intends to resolve concerns and complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage.

### **4. Social Media**

- 4.1. For concerns and complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible the Trust requests that complainants do not discuss complaints publicly via social media such as Facebook and X/Twitter. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality.

### **5. Complaints that result in a staff capability or disciplinary process or a police investigation**

- 5.1. If at any formal stage of the complaint it is determined that staff disciplinary or capability proceedings are necessary, the details of this action will remain confidential to the Trust. The complainant is not entitled to participate in the proceedings or receive any detail about them.
- 5.2. If the subject of the complaint is a matter being referred to the police, the complaints procedure will be suspended pending the outcome of that investigation and the complainant will be informed about the delay as appropriate. Once the outcome is known the complaint may continue if relevant.

## **6. Key Principles**

- 6.1. We believe that most concerns/complaints can be resolved satisfactorily by informal discussion either over the telephone or through a meeting involving the key people involved.
- 6.2. Complainants must make reasonable attempts to resolve their concern/complaint informally before the formal Stage Two process may be invoked.
- 6.3. Concerns/Complaints should be brought to our attention as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than 3 months after the incident being complained of (or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 3 months of the last of these incidents) will not be considered unless the Principal / Chair of Local Governing Body accepts that there are very good reasons to explain the delay or the complaint is of a very serious matter.
- 6.4. We expect our members of staff to address the complainant and to be addressed in turn in a respectful manner and for all forms of communication to be appropriate in tone, manner and content at all times. The procedure under Part 3 will only be used on very rare occasions to deal with unreasonably persistent complainants or unreasonable complainant behaviour.
- 6.5. All complaints will be acknowledged via email within 5 working College days of receipt during term time and dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- 6.6. Where a complaint is received outside of term time, we will consider it to have been received on the first college day following the holiday period. All formal complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully and Complainants will be kept informed of progress.
- 6.7. Complainants may have communication preferences due to: disability; learning difficulties; difficulties using English. The College or Trust central team will support alternative methods of contact in such circumstances as far as reasonably practicable.
- 6.8. The College and Trust central team will refuse to accept as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without informed consent of all parties being recorded.
- 6.9. Complainants may not approach individual Governors or Trustees to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may prevent them from considering complaints at later stages.
- 6.10. On rare occasions a college may receive complaints from a number of parents relating to the same issue. In order to deal with these complaints efficiently the College will follow the procedure set out in Part 4.
- 6.11. Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a college while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible, the Principal or Chair of Governors will discuss

any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' judgment.

## 7. Records of complaints

7.1. A record will be kept of all written formal complaints, including at what stage they were resolved and action taken by us as a result of those complaints regardless of whether they were upheld. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where:

- access is requested by the Secretary of State;
- disclosure is required in the course of a college inspection;
- an individual has a legal right to access their own personal data contained within such documentation; or
- under other legal authority

7.2. We will make the findings and recommendations of the panel (see section 3) available for inspection by the Trust and the Principal.

## 8. Representation

8.1. At any stage, the complainant may be accompanied by a friend, colleague or other representative. In this case, the complainant should make their own arrangements for such representation. Any representative is there to provide moral support and not to ask or answer questions on the complainant's behalf, except where such assistance is required by virtue of disability or a language barrier. Legal representation is neither appropriate nor permitted. The Complainant should inform the Governance Professional 3 days before the meeting of the details of any representative who will accompany them.

## Part 1: Complaints procedure

### 1. Stage One: Informal

1.1. Wherever possible an attempt to resolve the concern/complaint informally should be made. **Informal complaints or concerns should be raised with the relevant member of staff directly, for example class teacher, curriculum or pastoral leader.**

1.2. Where a concern/complaint is raised with the Principal (or CEO for central team complaints), it will normally be passed to the most appropriate member of staff to respond informally.

1.3. If the complaint has been made to the Chair of Governors (or Chair of Trustees for central team complaints), the CEO or a member of the Trust Central Leadership Team in the first instance, they will refer the complaint to the Principal (or CEO for Trust central team complaints). However, if the complaint concerns the Principal and has already been taken up with the Principal without being resolved, the complaint must be made in writing, either electronically or on paper, to the Local Governing Board Chair of Governors using the Complaint Form (Appendix B), via the Clerk/Governance Professional. The Chair will then invoke

the formal procedure.

- 1.4. The member of staff to whom the complaint has been referred will investigate and decide on any appropriate action. It is always helpful if the complainant can fully explain the nature of the concern and identify the outcome sought. Where appropriate, the Complainant may be invited to an informal meeting with the member of staff delegated to deal with the concern.
- 1.5. The Complainant and the Principal will be informed of the conclusions drawn from the investigation and action to be taken. This may be put in writing if appropriate. The Complainant will be given details of how to make a formal complaint if they remain dissatisfied.
- 1.6. It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way. The Chair of Governors (Chair of Trustees for central team complaints) shall have discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.
- 1.7. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the Complainant at this informal stage.
- 1.8. There is no suggested timescale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion, although it would be expected that most issues will be resolved within 15 working college days. Where no satisfactory solution has been found, Complainants will be advised that if they wish their concerns to be considered further, they should write to the Principal under Stage 2 of this procedure within 15 working college days.

## **2. Stage Two: Written Formal complaints**

- 2.1. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the Complainant should outline their concerns by completing the Trust Complaint Form (Appendix B), either electronically or on paper and send it to the Principal (CEO for Trust central team complaints).
- 2.2. Complaints will only be considered at Stage Two if the Complainant has made all reasonable efforts to resolve the concern/complaint informally via Stage One.
- 2.3. The complaint will normally be acknowledged in writing within 5 working College days of receipt. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This will normally be within 15 working College days of receipt.
- 2.4. The Principal (CEO for Trust complaints) will ensure the complaint is investigated fully. They may delegate responsibility for conducting the investigation to another member of staff.
- 2.5. If appropriate, the Principal (or CEO) (or someone appointed by them) may invite the Complainant to a meeting to clarify the complaint and to explore possible resolutions. If the complainant accepts that invitation, they may be accompanied

by one other person, such as a friend, relative, advocate or interpreter. Any representative is there to provide moral support and not to ask or answer questions on the complainant's behalf, except where such assistance is required by virtue of disability or a language barrier. Legal representation is neither appropriate nor permitted. Where possible, this meeting will take place within 10 working College days of receipt of the written complaint. The Complainant should inform the Principal 3 days before the meeting of the details of any representative who will accompany them.

- 2.6. Where the complaint concerns the Principal, the Complaint Form (Appendix B) should be sent to the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to the Local Governing Body.
- 2.7. Where the complaint concerns the CEO, Complaint Form (Appendix B) should be sent to the Chair of Trustees via the Governance Professional.
- 2.8. The investigator will aim to complete the investigation and respond within 15 college working days of receipt of the complaint form. The complainant will be informed of the decision and the reasons for it. This will include what action will be taken to resolve the complaint (if any). If they cannot provide a full response within that time, they will write to the complainant explaining this and give a date by which a full response will be provided.
- 2.9. The Complainant will be advised that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they may appeal under Stage 3 of this procedure. Such requests must be received within 10 days of receipt of the Stage 2 outcome.

### **3. Stage 3: Referral to the Appeal Panel**

- 3.1. If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the decision under Stage 2, they may request that a Complaints Appeal Panel be convened to consider the complaint. The Complaints Appeal Panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.
- 3.2. The request should be made by completing the form at Appendix C and sending to the Governance Professional within 10 working College days of the complainant receiving the outcome of Stage 2. The Complainant should concisely and with clarity state why they are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome and what would constitute a satisfactory resolution to their complaint. No additional documentation should be submitted unless at the discretion of the panel Chair.
- 3.3. The written request will be acknowledged within 5 college working College days of receipt.
- 3.4. The Governance Professional will arrange for a Complaints Appeal Panel to be convened, made up of at least three members, including:
  - members of a local governing body and/or trustees (as appropriate) with no prior involvement in the matter
- 3.5. The Appeal Panel will appoint one member to be the Chair of the Committee.

- 3.6. None of the members of the Complaints Appeal Panel will have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, nor been involved in any way in Stages 1- 2.
- 3.7. Every effort will be made to enable the hearing to take place within 20 working college days of the receipt of the request. The Governance Professional will liaise with all members of the Complaints Appeal Panel to propose and agree a date, time and venue for the meeting. This is most likely to be at the relevant College. The Trust Board is mindful of the challenges that volunteer Governors and Trustees can encounter in finding time to prepare and attend a hearing.
- 3.8. If, despite best efforts, it is not possible to find a mutually convenient date and time for a hearing within a reasonable timeframe, the Governance Professional may determine that the hearing proceeds on the basis of written submissions from both parties.
- 3.9. Circumstances may dictate that a hearing meet virtually.
- 3.10. The Complainant will be notified in writing of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the panel members who will be present. The Complainant will also be informed of the name of the person who will be presenting the case on behalf of the college (referred to in this policy as the 'college representative'). This may be the person who undertook the investigation at Stage 2 or another person with sufficient knowledge of the matter.
- 3.11. A copy of the complaint and any other relevant documents will be provided to the Complaints Appeal Panel as soon as practicable upon receipt. Copies of these documents shall also be provided to all those attending the panel hearing 5 working days before the meeting.
- 3.12. The Complaints Appeal Panel reserves the right not to consider any documentation presented by either party less than 3 working College days prior to the hearing. The Complaints Appeal Panel is under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and/or may take written statements into account.
- 3.13. The committee will not accept recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.
- 3.14. If the complainant fails to attend on the day without compelling reasons, the Complaints Panel Hearing will proceed in their absence.
- 3.15. Complainants may be accompanied to the hearing by a friend, relative, or other representative. Any representative is there to provide moral support and not to ask or answer questions on the complainant's behalf, except where such assistance is required by virtue of disability or a language barrier. Neither the college, Trust nor complainant can bring legal representation. The Complainant should inform the Governance Professional 3 days before the meeting of the details of any representative who will accompany them.
- 3.16. The meeting will be held in private, and will be as informal as circumstances allow, ensuring that each party has the opportunity to address the Complaints Appeal

Panel. The procedure to be followed will be explained to the parties in writing in advance of the hearing.

- 3.17. The meeting will usually be administered by the Clerk or Governance Professional. Where this is not possible, the Chair of the Panel will ensure that a suitable person is appointed to fulfil the clerking function. The Clerk/Governance Professional will ensure that sufficient notes are taken to record an accurate reflection of the points considered and any decisions taken or actions agreed. Electronic recordings of the hearing will not normally be permitted and, in any event, would require the consent of all those present.
- 3.18. A typical agenda for the panel hearing is set out in Appendix E. The complainant will have the opportunity to put their reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce evidence that has not previously put in writing and / or was not part of the initial complaint. The College (or central Trust team) representative will have the opportunity to respond. Each side, as well as the Panel members, will be able to ask questions. The Complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the Panel.
- 3.19. The Complaints Appeal Panel reserve the right to modify the above procedure at their sole discretion, for example requiring the parent and the College representative to present their complaint/actions separately to the Complaints Panel in the absence of the other party.
- 3.20. After the hearing, the Complaints Appeal Panel will consider their decision and inform the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, of their decision in writing, within 10 college days. The letter will set out the decision of the committee together with the reasons underpinning that decision. The panel can (by a majority if necessary):
  - (i) dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
  - (ii) uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
  - (iii) decide on any further action to be taken;
  - (iv) if appropriate, recommend changes to College /Trust systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

#### **4. Conclusion of Process**

- 4.1. The decision of the Complaints Appeal Panel Hearing is binding and concludes The Sixth Form Colleges Trust Complaints procedure. If the Complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they can contact the Department for Education.

#### **5. Complaint against a member of the Local Governing Body / Chair of the Local Governing Body or against a Trustee**

- 5.1. Where a complaint is brought against a member of the Local Governing Body, the Chair of the Local Governing Body will investigate the complaint (or appoint another member of the Local Governing Body to do so) in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process at Stage 2. The Clerk or Governance Professional will be the initial point of contact.

- 5.2. If the complaint is against the Chair of the Local Governing Body, then the Vice Chair of the Local Governing Body will investigate the complaint (or appoint another member of the Local Governing Body to do so) in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process at Stage 2.
- 5.3. If the complaint is against a member of the Board of Trustees, then the Chair of Trustees, (or in the case of a complaint against the Chair the Vice Chair) will investigate the complaint (or appoint another member of the board to do so) in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process at Stage 2. The initial point of contact will be the Governance Professional to the Trust Board.
- 5.4. In exceptional circumstances the Chair of Trustees may at their absolute discretion determine that a complaint against a Principal, or member of the Local Governing Body should be dealt with at Board level and if so, determined by the Chair of Trustees, begin at Stage 2.

## **Part 2: Concerns or complaints from other persons**

Part 1 of this complaints policy applies only to complaints made by students, parents or carers of current enrolled students within the Trust. However, the Trust wishes to work closely with other members of the local community and will deal with their concerns and complaints as follows:

- 1 **Stage 1** - a concern regarding a College or its operations may be made to any member of staff. That member of staff will attempt to resolve the matter immediately or may, if appropriate, refer the matter to their line manager or member of the senior leadership team who is best placed to deal with the concern. It is expected that most concerns will be responded to orally or in writing within 5 working College days. If a longer period is required, the Complainant will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.
- 2 **Stage 2** - where a concern is not resolved at Stage 1, or the Complainant wishes their concerns to be dealt with immediately as a formal complaint, the Complainant should put their complaint in writing and send this to the Principal of the relevant College to investigate. The Principal may delegate the task of investigation and/or responding to the complaint to a member of the senior leadership team or may escalate the **complaint** straight to Stage 3. A formal response to the complaint will usually be provided within 10 working College days of receipt of the letter of complaint although if a longer period is required to respond, the Complainant will be kept updated.
- 3 **Stage 3** - if the Complainant is not satisfied with the response at Stage 2, they may request a review by writing to the Governance Professional. They should write to the Governance Professional within 10 working College days of receipt of the letter at Stage 2. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if **exceptional** circumstances apply. The Governance Professional will arrange for a governor to consider the complaint alone or may convene a complaints appeal committee on the same terms as set out in Part 1 of this complaints policy. The decision at this stage will usually be sent to the Complainant within 20 working College days of receipt of the request for a review. The decision at Stage 3 exhausts the College's complaints procedure.

Concerns or complaints regarding the Principal or the Trust as a whole should be referred directly to the Governance Professional who will arrange for the stages above to be considered by an appropriate person.

### **Part 3: Unreasonably persistent complainants and unreasonable complainant behaviour**

There are rare circumstances where we will deviate from the Complaints Procedure set out in Parts 1 and 2. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- where the Complainant's behaviour or language towards staff, members of the local governing body or trustees is abusive, offensive, discriminatory or threatening either face-to-face, by telephone, in writing or electronically;
- where the Complainant's behaviour is hindering our consideration of complaints and/or the proper running of the college because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact, such as, if the complainant:
  - refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
  - refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
  - raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
  - changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
  - repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
  - refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the Trust's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
  - seeks an unrealistic outcome, such as the inappropriate dismissal of staff
  - makes excessive demands on College time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
  - knowingly provides falsified information
  - publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums
- where the Complainant's complaint is clearly frivolous, vexatious and/or has patently insufficient grounds. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as:
  - complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
  - insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
  - insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
  - complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
  - demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a College while

a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible, the Principal or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' judgment.

In these circumstances, we may:

- inform the Complainant that their behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonably persistent and ask them to change it;
- In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the College site.
- conduct the Complaints Panel on the papers only i.e., not hold a hearing;
- refuse to consider the complaint and, where Part 1 of this procedure applies, refer the complainant directly to the Department for Education.

In all cases we will write to tell the complainant why we believe their behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonably persistent, what action we are taking and the duration of that action.

We may take the decision not to respond to any further correspondence where:

- we have taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns
- the complainant has been given a clear statement of our position and their options and
- the complainant contacts us repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time

The case for ceasing further correspondence is stronger where:

- letters, emails, or telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive or make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff
- we have reason to believe the complainant is contacting us with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience

Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, members of the local governing body or Trustees, we will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

#### **Part 4: Complaints campaigns**

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint campaign is defined as a complaint from three or more separate individuals (whether or not connected with a College or the Trust) which are all based on the same subject.

Depending on the subject in question, we may deviate from the procedure set out in this policy and instead:

- send a template response to all complainants and/or
- publish a single response on the College /trust's website (as applicable)

## Appendix A

### Matters excluded from scope of this policy

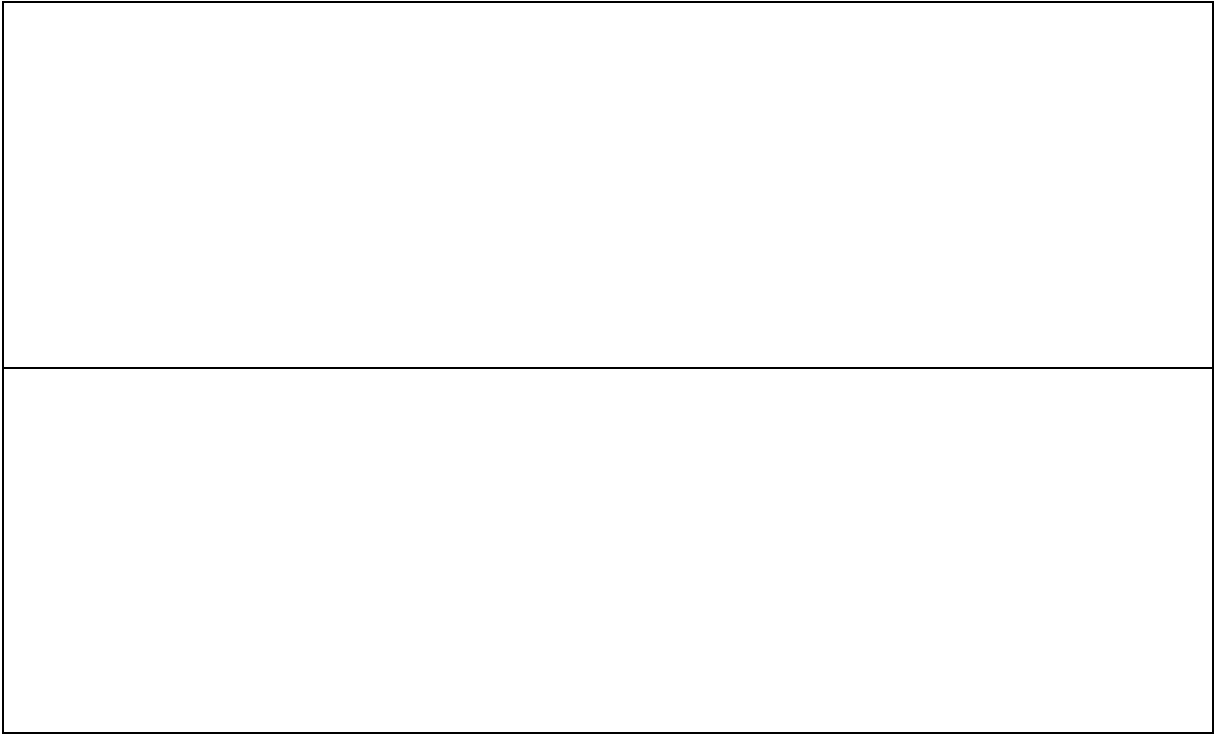
Excluded Matters	Signposting
Admissions	The process for challenging admissions decisions is set out in the College's Admissions Policy
Child protection matters	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns which you feel cannot or should not be raised directly with the College, you should contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
Exclusions	The process for challenging exclusions decisions is set out in College Disciplinary Policy
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use college premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Trusts' internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	<p>Certain complaints about staff may need to be dealt with under The College's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Concerns about statutory assessments of special educational needs should be raised directly with the local authority.
Whistleblowing	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p><a href="#">Whistleblowing policy</a></p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe">www.gov.uk/contact-dfe</a></p>

## Appendix B

### Complaint Form Stage 2

<b>Section A – Your details</b>	
Title: Mr / Mrs / Ms / Other	
Surname	
Forename	
Home Telephone Number	
Mobile Telephone Number	
Email Address	
Address and Postcode	
How would you prefer for us to contact you?	
<b>Student Forename and Surname</b>	

<b>Section B - Please provide details of your complaint</b> <b>Please include how you have tried to resolve the matter informally</b> (Please use a continuation sheet if required)
Date:
<b>What would constitute a satisfactory resolution of your complaint?</b>





## Appendix D

### Complaint Procedure Summary

#### STAGE 1: Informal Complaints

College/ central Trust staff seek to resolve the complaint informally through discussion with the complainant. A formal complaint will not be considered unless the complainant has made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution.

#### STAGE 2: Formal Resolution: Investigation by a member of the College Leadership Team, Trust Leadership Team or nominated Governor / Trustee

Written complaint via Complaint Form (Appendix B)

Action		Timescale
<b>College complaint</b>	<b>Trust central team Complaint</b>	
Received by Principal/Chair of Local Governing Body	Received by CEO / Chair of Trustees	Within 15 working College days of the Stage 1 outcome.
Investigation and formal response from the Principal / Chair of Local Governing Body	Investigation and formal Response from the CEO / Chair of Trustees	Within 15 working College days of complaint being received if possible

\*If the complaint is about the Principal, then the complaint will be directed to the Chair of Local Governing Body via the Clerk/Governance Professional

\*\*If the complaint is about the PCEO then the complaint will be directed to the Chair of Trustees via the Clerk/Governance Professional

#### STAGE 3: Appeals Hearing

Written complaint via Complaint Review Form (Appendix C) requesting review of Stage 2 decision by Complaint Appeal Panel.

Action	Timescale
Received by Governance Professional	Within 10 working College days of complainant receiving Stage 2 response
Complaints Panel Meeting	Within 20 working College days of College response where possible
Formal Response from the Panel	Within 10 working College days where possible of the Complaints Appeal Panel meeting

The conclusion of Stage 3 brings to an end the Sixth Form Colleges Trust complaints procedure. Complainants who remain dissatisfied may wish to read [Complaints about post 16 education and training provision funded by ESFA - GOV.UK](#) and contact the Department for Education via this link: [customer.complaints@education.gov.uk](mailto:customer.complaints@education.gov.uk) or by post to this address: Customer Service Team, Education and Skills Funding Agency Cheylesmore House Quinton Road, Coventry CV1

## Appendix E

### Sample Agenda for Stage 3 Complaint Appeal Panel meeting

1	Introductions by the Panel Chair
2	Complainant to explain why they are unhappy with the Stage 2 response. <i>Questions to the Complainant by the Panel and College / Trust Representative</i>
3	College / Trust Representative to explain the College /Trust's response. <i>Questions to Trust Representative by the Panel and Complainant</i>
4	Closing remarks by the Complainant
5	Closing remarks by the College / Trust Representative
6	Meeting closes and all parties leave whilst the Panel considers and makes its decision