

## Complaints Procedure

### 1. The Purpose of the Procedure

To ensure that learners and stakeholders are aware of how to make a complaint. This procedure will be available on the College website.

### 2. Related Documents

The Complaints Procedure will be promoted via the College Charter (available on the College Website ([www.chesterfield.ac.uk](http://www.chesterfield.ac.uk)))

Other relevant documentation includes; Student Code of Conduct, Student Disciplinary Procedure, Equality Policy, Assessment Appeals Procedure, Admissions and Fees Policy and Learner Services Policy.

### 3. Monitoring and Review

The number of formal complaints received by the organisation will be reviewed annually and a report is presented to the Corporation.

## The Procedure

### 1. Informal Stage

It is recognised that many concerns will be raised informally that can and should be dealt with immediately. Normally these concerns should be raised promptly and directly with either the class tutor/Programme Manager/Personal Tutor or Learner Support Manager. The aim is to resolve informal concerns quickly, keep matters low-key and enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the matter has been referred. However, if concerns are not satisfactorily resolved in this way complainants may follow the College's Formal Procedures for handling Complaints – as specified below.

### 2. Formal Procedures

#### Purpose

The formal procedures are intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

#### Scope

Students, general public and external agencies (Complainants may prefer matters to be raised on their behalf by their chosen representative, for example a friend, parent, guardian – this will need to be confirmed in writing).

## Definition

The College has defined a complaint as “any expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response”. This definition will apply consistently across all curriculum and functional areas. Complaints concerning assessment and accreditation are dealt with through appeals procedures set up with Awarding/Validating Bodies. Complaints from contractors will be dealt with as appropriate under the relevant contract terms.

## Responsibility of the College

- the College will acknowledge the formal complaint and aim to respond within a stated period of time
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint
- take action where appropriate
- welcome issues being brought to its attention to enable it to improve its services

## Responsibility of the Complainant

The complainant will be expected to:

- bring their complaint to the College's attention within 12 weeks after the reason for the complaint occurred
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to-date
- allow the College reasonable time to deal with the matter
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the College's control

## Responsibility for Action

All staff, Learner Support Manager, Head of Learner Services, Heads of Learning, Cross College Managers, Directors, the College Principal/ Chief Executive, Corporation Members.

## Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and the College observe the confidential nature of issues. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it might not be possible to maintain confidentiality and each complaint will be judged on its own merit. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant and/or their representative. In the case of students raising a complaint who are aged below 18 the College may be obliged to inform their parent/guardian.

## Monitoring, Reporting and Review

The College Corporation will monitor the handling of complaints in accordance with the College's procedures. The Corporation will receive an annual report from the Director of Engagement and Learner Services relating to complaints made directly to the College Principal/Chief Executive under stage 2 of the formal procedure. The College will review the Complaints Procedure annually. The College will measure the extent to which it is meeting its commitments as specified in the Student Charter, through its review of complaints and outcomes of opinion surveys etc.

### 3. How to make a Formal Complaint

#### Stage 1

Formal complaints should normally be submitted, in writing, (using the Record of Complaint form if possible – copy attached, although a letter or e-mail will also be accepted) to the Principal/SMT Secretariat Office who will direct the complaint to the most appropriate Directorate – Head of Learning or Cross College Manager and acknowledge receipt of the complaint and confirm whom they have referred the matter to.

\*Forms are available from College Managers/Learner Services

Where the complainant requires support in making a formal complaint they can ask the Learner Support Manager or another member of staff, to complete the form on their behalf, but the complainant must sign the form. Learner Services staff should check that informal procedures have been exhausted and, if appropriate, direct the complaint to the most appropriate section of the College to pursue an informal complaint.

Complainants may select a person of their choice to complain on their behalf (for example, friend, parent, guardian). Complainants are advised to keep their own records and any documents which they feel substantiate their complaint. Complainants will be asked to confirm whether or not the issue has been raised previously on an informal basis and if so, with whom.

The relevant Manager will be responsible for investigating the complaint, for responding to the complainant on progress, normally within 10 working days and for ensuring appropriate action is taken. A copy of the response is filed with the Principal/SMT Secretariat Office.

The College aims to resolve matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to investigate fully. Consequently timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative.

#### Stage 2

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 they have the option of writing to the Principal / Chief Executive at Chesterfield College, Infirmary Road, Chesterfield, S41 7NG, stating the reason why they are dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, normally within 10 working days of receiving written notification of the outcome of Stage 1.

The Principal/Chief Executive (or nominee who will usually be the Director of Engagement and Learner Services) will respond normally within 10 working days to inform the complainants of the action which will be taken to investigate their complaint. At this stage any new information will be considered.

#### Stage 3

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, they have the option of writing to the Chair of the College Corporation, c/o the Clerk to the Corporation, Infirmary Road, Chesterfield, S41 7NG, stating the reason why they are dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2, again normally within 10 working days of receiving written notification of the outcome of Stage 2.

The complainant will be informed within 10 working days of receipt of their letter of the action to be taken to investigate the complaint.

## Chesterfield College - Record of Complaint

If you wish to make a formal complaint, please complete this form or ask someone to complete it on your behalf, then either send or hand it to the Senior Management Team Secretariat Office (S130). The complaint will be acknowledged and the relevant Manager dealing with the matter will normally respond within 10 working days.

Name of complainant: (write clearly)	Contact Address:
Telephone Number:	Student's Course:
Course Code:	Person Code:

Details of the complaint (please use additional pages if necessary)

\*Complaints relating to course fees to be directed to the College Registrar

Please countersign below if you are the person completing this on behalf of the complainant

Signature of complainant:
Date:

Date logged and acknowledgement letter sent to complainant:  
 Referred to: (Please give name of manager and their functional area)  
 Date referred to designated manager:  
 Date receipt acknowledged by manager dealing with complaint:  
 Date response sent to complainant: