

<b>Name of Policy</b>	<b>COMPLAINTS POLICY</b>		
<b>Purposes</b>	To detail the procedures to be followed when a complaint is received		
<b>Responsibility of / Job Title</b>	Head of Student Services and Support		
<b>Equality Assessment By Whom</b>		<b>Date</b>	12/2015
<b>Version</b>	2	<b>Date of next review (month &amp; year)</b>	June 2017

		<b>Date</b>
<b>Approved by</b>	Senior Manager	
	ELT	30 August 2016
	Corporation	

<b>Related policies or procedures or parent policy if applicable</b>	Academic Appeals Procedure Refund Policy Complaints Procedure (CS02)
<b>Groups/bodies consulted in the development of the policy</b>	OIA Awarding Bodies
<b>To be published on College website</b>	YES

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

### **Stages of complaint**

#### **Early resolution**

This is the preferred stage of resolution where the response is swift and given at a local level and is mutually agreed by the staff member approached and complainant.

#### **Formal resolution**

If early resolution is not possible due to the nature or seriousness of the complaint or the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response the formal stage of the process will begin. The Head of Student Services and Support will manage the formal process and will act on behalf of the complainant to ensure the procedure is followed at all times. The Head of Student Services and Support (HSS&S) will also ensure any responses sent to the complainant satisfy this policy. If the complaint is regarding the HSS&S it will be investigated by the Head of Quality and Professional Development.

#### **Frivolous or Vexatious complaints**

If a complaint is considered to be frivolous or vexatious the College will have the right to terminate consideration of the complaint and associated procedures. In such cases the College will write to the learner concerned and explain why termination of procedures is appropriate. The College will consider a complaint to be frivolous or vexatious if:

- complaints are obsessive, harassing or repetitive
- insistence on pursuing non-meritorious complaints and or unrealistic outcomes occurs
- insistence on pursuing what may be unmeritorious complaint in an unreasonable manner occurs
- complaints are designed to cause disruption
- demands for redress without purpose or value occur

#### **Anonymous complaints**

Complaints sent without names and contact details will not be investigated further but will be filed by the Head of Student Services and Support.

#### **Support for learners wishing to make a complaint**

Learners should be directed to support services available for example Student Services or Student Representatives (where appropriate) who could provide independent advice on how to access systems or procedures to assist the learner with their concerns or documenting a complaint,

All procedures should be available in accessible formats and a case by case assessment should take place for each learner to ensure they have fair access to procedures. Records of any adjustments made to support the complainant will be kept and considered good practice. This assessment will be the responsibility of the Head of Student Services and Support.

Learners will be advised of the need to complete name and contact details with all complaints to allow the College the opportunity to investigate and feedback in full.

## **Higher Education Complaints**

The College complies with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and will issue all HE complainants with information on how to access support from the OIA when appealing a final response regarding HE provision at Macclesfield College if all College procedures have been exhausted.

### **Recording complaints**

Complaint records should be sufficient and proportionate in detail allowing identification, address and training opportunities to take place. The records will be maintained and stored by the Head of Student Services and Support.

### **Learning and development from complaints**

At the completion of a complaint all parties should understand the findings of the investigation and why decision(s) have been made.

The Head of Student Services and Support will ensure there is a procedure in place to act on any issues identified. These procedures should facilitate:

- use of data to identify root cause of complaints
- action to reduce the chance of re-occurrence of problems
- recording of corrective actions
- systematic review of complaints to improve performance and enrich self-assessment

Analysis and reporting should allow patterns / trends to be identified. Reports will be presented to the Executive Leadership team termly and to Corporation annually. The level of detail provided in the reports will be proportionate to the committees remit. Third party organisations and Awarding Bodies will receive complaint reports as per their procedural requirements.

### **Complaints accountability**

Complaints can be made to any member of staff. All staff members will be made aware of the Complaints Procedure and how to handle them at the early resolution stage. If this informal stage cannot resolve the issue staff will need to be aware of the appropriate referral route. The College's policy is to use informal resolution where possible to avoid escalation.

### **Complaints outcomes**

All complainants will receive a letter detailing the outcome of any investigations and what action, if any, the College is taking to rectify the situation. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome they can appeal in writing to the Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality within 5 working days of the response.