



**Greenhead College
Corporation**

**COMPLAINTS
POLICY**

Revised May 2021

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Introduction

Greenhead College aims to provide a high-quality education and experience to its students. However, it recognises that openness to questions and criticism, and responding promptly and positively to concerns, may lead to improvements in College procedures and provision.

A complaint is defined as a clear statement of dissatisfaction about any specified aspect of the College's work. Complainants may be students, parents, carers, grandparents, local residents or anyone with an interest in the work of the College. The College will aim to deal with any complaint in an open, transparent manner, respecting confidentiality where this is required, and strive to achieve a prompt and satisfactory resolution.

This policy deals with specified complaints against the College which fall outside the scope of the following policies which are available on the College website:

- **Student conduct:** concerns or complaints regarding a student's behaviour and/or conduct may be dealt with through the College's Student Re-engagement Policy or Fitness to Study Policy;
- **Staff conduct:** concerns or complaints regarding members of staff may be dealt with through the College's specific employment procedures, e.g. the Staff Discipline and Grievance Policy or Whistleblowing Framework.

For the purpose of this policy, the person referred to as making a complaint will be referred to as the complainant.

2. General complaints procedure

All concerns/complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible. If concerns/complaints are raised outside normal working days, i.e. within College holiday periods, they will be referred to the most appropriate member of staff and dealt with as soon as possible. (The target is to respond to all complaints within one or two working days.)

Should the complainant wish to speak to a member of College staff, they should telephone the College on **01484 422032**. The complainant will then have the opportunity to discuss their concern with the most appropriate staff member, e.g. PA to the Principal, Personal Tutor, Head of Department, Assistant Principal, Director of Finance and Resources, Deputy Principal, Principal, etc.

However, complainants will not be directed to discuss their concern with either teaching or support staff. If teaching or support staff are contacted directly via an email, telephone call or in person, they should refer the matter to their line manager.

The following gives a broad indication of who the complainant may contact in the Senior Leadership Team in order to raise a particular concern:

- **General curriculum and pastoral-related issues:** Deputy Principal (Mo Bunter, mbunter@greenhead.ac.uk);
- **Finance, resources and health and safety issues:** Director of Finance and Resources (John Blake, jblake@greenhead.ac.uk);
- **Tutorial and safeguarding issues:** Assistant Principals (Student Support and Welfare) (Usman Anwar, uanwar@greenhead.ac.uk and Kate Abel, kabel@greenhead.ac.uk);
- **Timetable, teaching, and assessment issues:** Assistant Principals (Quality and Education) (Mark Mitchell, mmitchell@greenhead.ac.uk and Tom Rowley, trowley@greenhead.ac.uk).

Alternatively, the complainant may wish to speak to the PA to the Principal (Sarah Whittle, swhittle@greenhead.ac.uk) or contact the Principal directly (Simon Lett, slett@greenhead.ac.uk). The Principal may refer the complainant's concern to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, above.

If the complainant wishes to raise a concern regarding a Governor's activities or actions, they should contact the Clerk to the Corporation (Ian Leedham, ileedham@greenhead.ac.uk).

At this initial stage, it may be unclear whether the complainant is seeking further information, has simply misunderstood a situation, has a minor concern or is making a formal complaint. However, in all cases the appropriate member of staff will discuss the matter with the complainant and, where necessary, other members of staff in College, with the aim of resolving the issue in a prompt and efficient way.

If the member of staff dealing with the issue feels it is of a more serious nature, e.g. a formal complaint, they must refer it to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who will deal with the matter.

The complainant will be informed of the outcome of the discussions and what action, if any, the College is intending to take. A written record of the complainant's concern/complaint will be kept by the person who dealt with the issue, respecting confidentiality where this is required. Depending on the concern/complaint, this may be written on the College's pastoral log, recorded as an email to the appropriate person in College or kept as a hard copy.

3. Formal complaints procedure

The complainant must set out their concern in writing to the Principal or his PA. The complainant will then receive an initial response from the Principal or his PA within five working days, acknowledging receipt of their complaint.

The Principal will arrange for a full investigation of the complaint, ensuring that full records are kept of any conversations and meetings, whilst respecting confidentiality where this is required. The Principal may also delegate responsibility for managing the complaint to another member of the Senior Leadership Team (see bullet points, top of page 3). If the complainant wishes to complain about the Principal's actions, he will refer the managing of the complaint to the Chair of Governors.

The Principal (or designated senior leader or Chair of Governors) will aim to complete any investigation and report back to the complainant in writing within ten working days. The Principal (or designated senior leader or Chair of Governors) will make it clear to the complainant if the investigation is likely to take longer than ten working days and provide the date for when it will be concluded.

The Principal will bring serious or ongoing complaints to the attention of Governors at either the earliest relevant Committee and/or Corporation meeting.

4. Appeals

Following receipt of the Principal's (or designated senior leader or Chair of Governors) written response, if the complainant is still not satisfied, they may appeal to the Chair of Governors.

The appeal should be made in writing through the Clerk to the Corporation within ten working days of receipt of the Principal's letter. The Chair will review the treatment of the complaint, which may involve discussing the matter with the Principal, members of the Senior Leadership Team and/or other Governors.

If the Chair or any other Governor(s) has already been involved in dealing with the matter, he will ask another Governor conduct the appeal.

The complainant will receive a written reply from the Chair of the Corporation (or designated Governor), through the Clerk, within 10 working days.

5. Serial or unreasonable complaints

The College is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. However, the College does not expect the complaint investigator(s) or other staff to tolerate unreasonable behaviour, which it defines as conduct which:

- Is aggressive, offensive or intimidatory (e.g. use of discriminatory or foul language in written and/or verbal communication);
- Hinders its consideration of the complaint (e.g. lack of cooperation, refusal to articulate the complaint, changes in the basis of the complaint, excessive demands in unrealistic timescales, etc.).

Whenever possible, the complaint investigator will discuss any concerns with the complainant and ask them to modify their approach so that their complaint may be dealt with promptly. However, if the unreasonable behaviour persists, the Principal will write to the complainant explaining that their approach is such that it is preventing the complaint from being dealt with. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the Principal may deem that the complaint cannot be addressed any further.

6. Useful addresses

If the complainant wishes to raise a concern directly with an examination board, the details can be obtained either from the College's Examinations Manager (Matt Darlington, mdarlington@greenhead.ac.uk) or by consulting the College's prospectus which specifies the examination board under each subject entry.

Other useful addresses:

- **Department for Education**
gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education
- **Education and Skills Funding Agency**
gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency
- **Ofsted**
gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Author:	Principal
<p><i>“This policy has been impact assessed to ensure it complies with all aspects of Equality and Diversity.</i></p> <p><i>Members are reassured that this policy is compliant with current equality legislation”.</i></p>	