Complaints Policy and Procedure for Students and Parents/Guardians

Last update 03.08.16
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<tr>
<th><strong>Policy:</strong></th>
<th>Complaints Policy and Procedure for Students and Parents/Guardians</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Version:</strong></td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Synopsis:</strong></td>
<td>This policy explains how the college will deal with complaints by students and parents/guardians. It contains a step-by-step procedure for raising and addressing complaints. A flow chart is appended to clarify each step of the complaints handling process.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relevant to:</strong></td>
<td>All staff, students and parents/guardians</td>
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<td><strong>Publication:</strong></td>
<td>This policy and procedures will be made available to students and parents via bellerbys.com (<a href="http://www.bellerbys.com">http://www.bellerbys.com</a>) and to staff via myStudyGroup (<a href="https://mystudygroup.com">https://mystudygroup.com</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date introduced:</strong></td>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April 2014</td>
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<td><strong>Next review date:</strong></td>
<td>August 2017</td>
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| **Date modified/reviewed** | November 2014
July 2015
3<sup>rd</sup> August 2016 (Charles Runacres) Reviewed. Minor changes made. |
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1. Introduction

Bellerbys College aims to provide a rewarding, enjoyable and equitable experience for all students. We want to hear if students and parents/guardians are dissatisfied in order that we can quickly address issues and identify areas where changes or improvements may be needed.

Students and parents/guardians who wish to make a complaint to Bellerbys College with regard to its actions, provisions or practices should do so in accordance with this policy and procedures.

2. Application of this policy and procedures

This policy and procedures apply to the submission and management of all complaints that a student or parent/guardian wishes to make in relation to college actions, provisions or practices after the student confirms acceptance of their place at the college and during the student’s registration with the college.

Complaints about matters not within college control, for example appeals against academic grades awarded by external bodies, are not managed under this policy.

Appeals against decisions made by the college with regard to disciplinary matters, including the temporary or permanent exclusion of a student and attendance-related disciplinary actions, come under the umbrella of ‘complaints’ and should be submitted and managed in accordance with this policy and procedures.

Pre-arrival complaints and appeals relating to student application and admission processes are managed in accordance with Bellerbys College Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedures, which can be found on www.bellerbys.com.

In the event that you have concerns relating to the welfare of a student, then please refer to the Child Protection Policy and Reporting of Concerns or Allegations of Harm to Students Policy for next steps.

3. Policy and procedures aim

The aim of this policy and procedures is to set out a clear, consistent and effective means for identifying and addressing areas of student or parent/guardian dissatisfaction.

4. General principles underlying this policy and procedures

The principles underlying this policy are:

- The policy and procedures for submitting and managing complaints from students and parents/guardians are transparent, explicit, clear, and consistently applied
- The policy and procedures for managing complaints provide a fair and timely means for hearing, investigating and resolving issues
• The college will keep written records and reports relating to all complaints and their outcomes, which will be stored securely and kept confidential within the college. However, information regarding complaints may need to be shared with third parties, such as external education inspectors. In such instances, personal details about complainants will not be provided
• Complaints records will be reviewed as part of annual college self-evaluation activities.

5. Procedures for submitting complaints

5.1. Procedures for students
Students wishing to make a complaint are requested to do so as soon as possible after the incident or experience that led to them feeling dissatisfied.

Informal procedures
If a student has a complaint, they are encouraged to discuss the issue informally directly with the person responsible, if applicable, to try to resolve it outside of a formal complaints procedure. An informal complaint can be made in writing (by letter or email) but it should be clearly identified as an ‘informal complaint’.

Alternatively, a student may wish to discuss their complaint with the person responsible for welfare or with their Personal Tutor as a first step in trying to resolve the issue informally.

A student will normally receive a response (email or letter) to an informal complaint within 5 working days.

Formal procedures
If a student wishes to make a formal complaint, they should do so in writing (by letter or email) to the relevant person, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaints relating to…</th>
<th>Address complaint to…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student safeguarding and welfare/child protection</td>
<td>Director of Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning, internal assessment and attendance</td>
<td>Academic Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student disciplinary matters</td>
<td>Director of Student Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equality and diversity</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation – residences and homestay</td>
<td>Director of Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance, building/facilities safety or security</td>
<td>Director of Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>Director of Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accident, injuries, illness and medical treatment/services</td>
<td>Director of Student Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If the relevant person responsible for your complaint is directly involved in any incidents connected with your complaint, please consult the person responsible for welfare or your Personal Tutor for advice on how to direct your complaint.

Please include the following details in your complaint correspondence:
- Your name and student identification number
- A general description of your complaint
- A description of any specific incidents that occurred that led you to make the complaint, and the dates on which they occurred
- The names or positions of any members of staff or third parties directly relevant to your complaint
- The names of any other students directly relevant to your complaint

5.2. Procedures for parents/guardians
Parents/guardians wishing to make a complaint are requested to do so as soon as possible after the incident or experience that led to them feeling dissatisfied.

*Informal procedures*
If a parent/guardian has a complaint, they are encouraged to discuss the issue informally with the college Director of Student Services as a first step towards resolving the issue.

A parent/guardian will receive a response to an informal complaint within 5 working days.

*Formal procedures*
If a parent/guardian wishes to make a formal complaint, they should do so in writing (by post or email) to the Principal including the following information:
- Your name and the (email) address to which you wish the reply to be sent
- The name of your son/daughter/ward, and their student identification number
- A general description of your complaint
- A description of any specific events that occurred that led you to make the complaint, and the dates on which they occurred
- The names or positions of any members of staff or third parties directly relevant to your complaint
- The names of any other students directly relevant to your complaint

6. Bellerbys College procedures for managing formal complaints

6.1. Acknowledging complaints
The recipient of a complaint will acknowledge it by email within 48 hours if complaints have been sent by email, or if a contact email address is provided in a complaint made by post. Complaints will not be acknowledged by return post.
6.2. Reviewing and responding to complaints

The recipient of a complaint will review and record the details, conduct any necessary investigations, gather relevant information and evidence, and respond to the complainant within 5 working days of receiving the complaint. Responses by post will be sent within 5 working days but may not reach the complainant until after this time.

If there is a valid reason why a satisfactory investigation cannot be conducted within this timeframe, for example if relevant members of staff are on leave, the complainant will be informed of this within 5 days of receiving the original complaint. In such cases, a formal response will be provided within a maximum of 15 working days.

The response to a complaint will endeavour to address all issues raised as well as outline actions that will be taken following the complaint.

The college Principal will review responses to all complaints before they are sent.

If a complaint is in regard to an action taken by the college Principal, for example a decision to permanently exclude a student, the complaint will be referred to the Director of Bellerbys or an individual delegated with the responsibility to investigate the complaint by the Director of Bellerbys College. The process as described in 6.3 will be followed.

6.3. Procedures if complainants are dissatisfied with a response

If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, please write to the Proprietor to request a formal complaint hearing. The request for a hearing will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

A complaint hearing is normally arranged within 10 working days and no later than 15 working days of the receipt of a request for a hearing, but will done so with due regard for the circumstances of the complainant. A hearing will only be held outside of this timeframe in exceptional circumstances.

The hearing panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in previous consideration of the complaint; one member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the college. The panel will hear from the complainant, the member of staff who investigated and responded to the original complaint, and any witnesses that the complainant or college wish to bring.

The student and/or parent/guardian may be accompanied to the hearing by a third party for support.

The hearing panel will reach a decision in respect of the complaint, which may involve a period of deliberation. The decision of the panel will normally be communicated to the complainant within 10 working days of the hearing.

The panel’s findings and recommendations will be confirmed in writing to the complainant and if it is necessary to others involved in the complaint. A copy of the panel’s findings and recommendations will be retained by the college.
This is the end of the college complaints procedure.

If a complainant does not wish to accept the outcome of a complaint hearing, they should pursue the matter through the Legal Ombudsman:

Legal Ombudsman  
PO Box 15870  
Birmingham B30 9EB  
United Kingdom  
Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk  
Telephone: +44 (0)300 555 0333  
Website: http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/

7. Records and reports relating to complaints
All complaints should be recorded in a central college complaints log and all documents retained/saved in a secure location. A note should be made in a student’s record if they have made a complaint that is currently being investigated if it is relevant for other staff to be aware of it. Further details of the complaint will only be available to relevant staff as needed.

The log must state whether the complaint was resolved through the formal complaints procedure or the panel hearing and what actions were pursued regardless of whether the complaint was upheld or not. All records will be retained confidentially except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection subject to current legislation.