



Compliments and Complaints Policy

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1. Introduction

At East Norfolk Form College we strive to achieve high standards in the discharge of our responsibilities. We welcome feedback on all aspects of our work both positive and negative as we see this as a way to help us improve on our practice and to minimise the likelihood of concerns occurring. Both types of feedback are recorded and discussed at Senior Management team meetings on a weekly basis. An annual report is also presented and discussed by Governors. All concerns will be handled fairly, sympathetically and efficiently, within the stated and with the utmost confidentiality (wherever possible). All compliments and complaints are collated and recorded by the Executive Assistant to the Principal.

We will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any other unjustifiable reason. We will consider and try to overcome any difficulties that you have in accessing the College. We will do our best to understand your needs and answer your questions.

Where a concern does arise, we shall treat the matter seriously and aim to resolve it quickly, effectively and to the satisfaction of all parties. We hope that, wherever possible, complaints will be resolved informally.

In responding to a concern, the College undertakes to:

- listen carefully to the complaint and respond to the matter in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy
- record the complaint accurately and in accordance with the Data Protection Act
- investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated time frame
- notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal
- if the complaint is upheld, inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented in order to ensure that there is no re-occurrence.

Anonymous Complaints

Complaints received anonymously will be heard, but action will be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation. In order for any complaint to be heard at Formal Level then the following information is required:

- Name and address of complainant
- Name and address of student concerned (if applicable)
- Complaint must be received in writing (email correspondence is not sufficient)

A complaint will only be investigated under Stage 3 (and beyond) if the complainant gives permission for full details of the complaint to be shared with the subject(s) of the complaint.

2. Complaints Procedure: Students

Informal Resolution of Concerns

(N.B. If your complaint is of a very serious nature (for example, where it involves the health or safety of one or more members of the College community, you may decide to proceed directly to Stage 3

Stage 1: seek the help of a member of staff

- If an issue arises concerning a member of College staff or another student, where you do not feel able to talk directly to the person concerned, you should first of all seek the help of a member of staff. This may be your tutor, a subject teacher or student mentor.
- In accordance with the College's confidentiality policy, discuss the issue with this member of staff and decide what, if any, further action you want to be taken.
- With your consent, this member of staff may seek further advice or evidence, and will act at all times in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy.
- You should now try, if possible, to resolve the matter with the person concerned, either on your own or with the help of the member of staff in whom you have confided. You should make and keep an agreed, dated record of your concerns and details of discussions with the person(s) concerned.

Stage 2: Seek the help of a more senior member of staff

- If after Stage 1 the issue has not been resolved (to your satisfaction), you may refer it to a more senior member of staff, an Assistant Director or Curriculum Director
- On your request, this person will investigate the issue fully and will respond to you within five working days to discuss the case and, where appropriate, to agree what action will be taken to resolve the matter.
- If your initial contact is made with a senior member of staff, he or she will support you in re-directing your enquiry, if appropriate, to Stage 1.

Formal Resolution of Complaint

Stage 3: Refer to the Senior Management Team

N.B. If the complaint is about the Assistant Director or Curriculum Director you should address your complaint directly to the Principal. If the complaint is about the Principal, it should be addressed to the Clerk to the Corporation for the attention of the Chair of the Corporation.

- If after Stage 2 you are not satisfied that the issue has been dealt with satisfactorily, then you may submit to the Senior Management Team a formal written statement of your complaint (an exemplar form which you may wish to use for this purpose is attached in Appendix 1). This must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to the Principal.
- Formal written complaints made about any aspect of College provision will receive an acknowledgement from a member of the Senior Management Team within three working days.
- The member of the Senior Management Team or their nominated representative will then investigate the matter and respond within ten working days of receiving your written statement to explain how your complaint has been dealt with.
- Where a complaint is found to be justified, remedial action will be taken.
- Where a complaint is not upheld, a full explanation will be given and your right of appeal will be explained to you.
- If you submit a complaint to the Senior Management Team without first following stages 1 and 2 above, they will usually advise you to seek redress informally before

submitting a formal complaint. The exception to this is where the complaint is of a very serious nature (eg where the health or safety of one or more members of the College community is put at risk) in which case the complainant may choose to progress straight to Stage 3.

Appeal (See 4 below)

3. Complaints Procedure: Parents/Carers

Informal Resolution

N.B. If your complaint is of a very serious nature (for example, where it involves the health or safety of one or more members of the College community, you may decide to proceed directly to Stage 3

Stage 1: seek the help of your daughter/son's tutor or student mentor

- If an issue arises concerning any matter about which you may be considering the possibility of making a complaint, you should first of all seek the help of your daughter/son's tutor or Student Mentor.
- In accordance with the College's confidentiality policy, discuss the issue with the tutor and decide what, if any, further action you want to be taken.
- With your consent, the tutor may seek further advice or evidence – while still acting in accordance with the confidentiality policy.
- You should now try, if possible, to resolve the matter with the help of the tutor in whom you have confided.

Stage 2: Seek the help of a more senior member of staff

- If the issue has still not been resolved (to your satisfaction), you may refer it to a more senior member of staff, an Assistant Director or Curriculum Director.
- On your request, this person will investigate the issue fully and will respond to you within five working days to discuss the case and, where appropriate, to agree what action will be taken to resolve the matter.
- If your initial contact is made with a senior member of staff, he or she will support you in re-directing your enquiry, if appropriate, to Stage 1.

Formal Resolution of Complaint

N.B. If the complaint is about an Assistant Director or Curriculum Director, you should address your complaint directly to the Principal; if your complaint is about the Principal, you should write to the Clerk to the Corporation for the attention of the Chair of the Corporation.

Stage 3: Refer to the Senior Management Team

If after Stage 2 you are not satisfied that the issue has been dealt with satisfactorily, then you may submit to the Senior Management Team a formal written statement of your complaint (an exemplar form which you may wish to use for this purpose is attached in Appendix 1). This must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to the Principal.

Formal written complaints made about any aspect of College provision will receive an acknowledgement from a member of the Senior Management Team within three working days.

The member of the Senior Management Team or their nominated representative will then investigate the matter and respond within ten working days of receiving your written statement to explain how your complaint has been dealt with.

Where a complaint is found to be justified, remedial action will be taken.

Where a complaint is not upheld, a full explanation will be given and your right of appeal will be explained to you.

If you submit a complaint to the Senior Management Team without first following stages 1 and 2 above, they will usually advise you to seek redress informally before submitting a formal complaint. The exception to this is where the complaint is of a very serious nature (eg where the health or safety of one or more members of the College community is put at risk) in which case the complainant may choose to progress straight to Stage 3.

4. Appeal Procedure

If you remain dissatisfied after Stage 3, you may appeal in writing to the Principal within ten working days of your receiving written notification of Stage 3. If the complaint is about the Principal, your appeal should be made to the Chair of the Corporation by writing to the Clerk to the Corporation.

The purpose of the appeal is to consider whether:

- the investigation in Stage 3 was conducted in line with College policy and procedures
- the outcomes of Stage 3 were appropriate in light of the evidence presented

Only in exceptional circumstances would the purpose of the appeal be to re-investigate the case.

- The complainant must give specific grounds for the appeal and the Principal (or designated deputy) shall address her/himself exclusively to consideration of these grounds. In the absence of such specific grounds, the appeal shall not be considered.
- The Principal's decision and the reasons for that decision will be notified in writing to the complainant within ten working days of receiving notification of the appeal. If it is not possible for a decision to be reached within this period the complainant will receive a written explanation for the delay and be informed of when the written decision will be available.

Decisions

In the event of an appeal on grounds of defective procedure (hereinafter called "procedural grounds"), the outcome of the appeal shall EITHER be a statement that:

- the procedure followed during the investigation complies fully with the rules made for its operation; OR
- the procedure followed during the investigation entailed a minor breach or breaches of the rules made for its operation, but these were not of sufficient seriousness as to have prejudiced the interests of the appellant or led to a different outcome of the

investigation than would, in the opinion of a reasonable person, have been reached had the breach or breaches not occurred; OR

- the procedure followed during the investigation entailed a breach or breaches of the rules made for its operation which were of sufficient seriousness as to have prejudiced the interests of the appellant or led to a different outcome of the investigation than would, in the opinion of a reasonable person, have been reached had the breach or breaches not occurred.

In the event of an appeal on grounds that the decision reached about the action to be taken was inappropriate in the context of the evidence presented (hereinafter called “substantive grounds”), the outcome of the appeal shall EITHER be a statement that:

- the decision reached in Stage 3 was reasonable in the context of the evidence presented and the outcome or action taken appropriate; OR
- the decision reached in Stage 3 was reasonable in the context of the evidence presented, but the outcome or action taken was inappropriate; OR
- the decision reached in Stage 3 was not reasonable in the context of the evidence presented.

If reaching either of the last two decisions set out above, the Principal shall ensure that the defect is remedied.

The outcomes of the appeal shall be communicated within 10 working days of receiving the notice of appeal and this shall mark the final stage of the appeal process. The Principal’s decision will be final and binding.

5. The Right to be accompanied

At any stage in the above procedures, the student or parent may be accompanied by a friend. This could be another student, or a parent of a student or a member of staff. In order for students or parents to exercise their right to be accompanied they must make a reasonable request to the College. Where the chosen friend cannot attend on the date proposed for any meeting, an alternative time and date can be offered so long as it is reasonable and falls within five working days of the original day proposed.

6. Records

At all stages of a complaint, records will be kept detailing the nature of the complaint raised, the College’s response, any action taken and the reasons for that action. These records will be stored in accordance with the College’s confidentiality policy and retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 which requires release of certain data to individuals on their request. Copies of any meeting records will be given to the individual concerned although in certain circumstances some information may be withheld, for example to protect a witness.

Formal Complaint Form

When complete, please return this form to: **Lisa Bell, Executive Assistant to the Principal
East Norfolk Sixth Form College, Church Lane, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. NR31 7BQ**

Please complete the following details:

Name:

Address:

Postcode: _____ **Telephone No:** _____

Please tick in one of the following boxes:

Student **Student Admission No.:** _____ **Staff** **Parent/Carer** **Public**
(as on shown ID card)

This concern/suggestion is about: Bullying Sexism Racism Homophobia Religion
Disability Issues Other
College Environment Catering/Food Services Support Services Teaching & Learning
(Buildings, facilities, access etc)

Brief details of concern/suggestion (please include dates, times, locations, names of individuals involved and any further details relevant to the concern/suggestion and include the steps already

taken under Stages 1 and 2 of the College's Compliments and Complaints Policy to resolve this matter.
(Please continue on an additional sheet if necessary):

Would you like your name to be kept confidential?* Yes No

*This may impair our ability to thoroughly investigate

This is for statistical purposes only and will be treated as confidential (please tick relevant boxes)

Age: 16-19 19 plus Gender: _____

Disability/Learning Difficulty? Yes No

White

British
Irish
Any other White background

Mixed

White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
White and Asian

Black or Black British

Caribbean
African
Any other Black background

Any other mixed background

Asian or Asian British

Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Any other Asian background

Other Ethnic Groups

Chinese
Any other ethnic group

Not stated

do not wish to disclose

Signature: _____

Date: _____

For office Use Only

Date complaint received _____ Department _____

Complaint forwarded to _____ Date _____

Outcome of complaint