



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY STATEMENT

Brockenhurst College welcomes feedback on all aspects of its provision and service. If we fall below the standards one of our stakeholders expects, we need to know how and why this has happened so we can resolve the situation and alter process or approach as necessary.

Learners, parents/guardians, employers, other members of the public and Brockenhurst College Staff should be able to make a complaint about any issue concerning the College which is of concern to them. The procedure of making a complaint needs to be clear and easily and widely available to interested parties. Anyone who needs support to make a complaint will be offered the most appropriate assistance to meet their individual need. All complaints received by the College will be logged, taken seriously and treated sensitively. However, the formal procedure will be considered only where complaints concern issues which have arisen within a 3-year time period, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Examples of complaints include:

- Failure by the College to meet obligations including those outlined in course/learner handbooks or a learner charter.
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material and other information provided by the College.
- Concerns about the delivery of a programme, teaching or administration including, where applicable, that provided by a partner provider.
- Poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by the College.
- Complaints involving other organisations or contractors providing a service on behalf of the College.

Examples of complaints that are not included

- Personal dislike of a teacher
- Personal dislike of the assessment methods that were explained before the start of the programme and during the induction
- Dislike of the content of the programme

This Policy outlines how a learner or member of the wider public may complain, if the need arises. It also gives details of how to complain to external bodies following advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In the event of the Complaints Procedure below being put into operation, a record of the complaint must be kept at each stage in a central 'Complaints' file held at Senior Management level.

If a member of staff has an issue of concern, s/he will be encouraged to deal with this informally through the normal College channels of line management. If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally, then the member of staff may invoke the Complaints Procedure or formal Grievance Procedure if they so wish¹.

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) defines this as *“an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a provider’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider”*. The UK Quality Code express it as an *“expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of a student’s learning opportunities”*.

No learner will be disadvantaged as a result of bringing a complaint and the College will not tolerate any victimisation of anyone raising a concern under this policy.

WHO WILL DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS?

A member of the Senior Management Team will oversee each formal complaint and may wish to delegate to a Head of Curriculum where appropriate. Each member of the Senior Management Team will deal with complaints directly within their area of responsibility. The Principal will oversee more general complaints or complaints about other members of the Senior Management team should these arise.

PROCEDURE

We encourage learners and their parents/guardians, employers or members of the wider community to resolve issues and disagreements informally at a local level without reference to a member of the Senior Management Team. If this is not possible, the formal procedure will be invoked and an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team involved. However, it is the right of any party to require a concern to be dealt with as a formal complaint at the outset if they so wish ¹.

In the absence of an informal resolution, the complaint should be submitted in writing and the formal procedure will be invoked and procedures followed. A learner may appoint a representative but this person cannot be a professional legal adviser.

1. A complaint log form should be obtained by the member of staff receiving the complaint, from the Principal’s Office. These forms will be numbered and logged.
2. The top section of the form should be completed by the recipient of the complaint, any written evidence attached and the complaint referred to an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team, who will decide whether to deal directly with the complaint or oversee this and delegate to a Head of Curriculum.
3. If the complaint concerns a member of staff, the person concerned should be informed and given the opportunity to respond fully either verbally and/or in writing. From the outset, s/he should have access to all relevant correspondence or documentation. The member of staff’s comments will be noted. The member of staff should be informed of the outcomes of the complaint.
4. The member of the Senior Management Team will respond initially, in writing, to the complainant. This initial response acknowledging the complaint should take place within 5 working days and preferably by return. Further investigations, if needed, should be completed and the complainant informed of the outcomes within 10 working days, if possible. If an investigation requires a longer time frame, the complainant should be kept informed of progress.

5. If a complainant is not satisfied with the findings, then they may wish to appeal to the Principal. If so, the complainant should make this known within 10 days of receipt of the outcome, in writing to the Principal.
6. The appeal decision is final. The Principal will respond in writing within 10 days. If an investigation takes longer, the complainant will be kept informed.
7. Confidential notes should be kept and details of the complaint stored in a central 'Complaints' file with the Senior Management Team member. These records will be used on an annual basis to monitor the number and type of complaints and the response and resolutions rates. Other details will remain confidential.
8. In rare cases, the Senior Management Team member may decide, after investigations have been carried out, that the issue justifies referral to a number of other College Policies including:
 - Learner Disciplinary Policy
 - Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

The member of the Senior Management Team should inform the student/member of staff as soon as these procedures are being considered.

If the College processes are exhausted and if the complainant is still dissatisfied they can write to:

FE Students

ESFA Complaints Team
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Higher Education Students

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for HE
Abbey Wharf
57-75 Kings Road
Reading
RG1 3AB

For Homestay learners it must be noted that if a satisfactory resolution cannot be found then the complainant can contact Ofsted <https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints>. **Ofsted Contact** Number: 0300 123 1231. Or write to

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

First Aid Industry Body (FAIB) - First Aid – for learners on this qualification it must be noted that the final arbiter is FAIB in all instances.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Policy and Procedure will be monitored on an annual basis by Planning and Advisory Board. A review of complaints will form part of the Corporation's annual monitoring of the College Charter.

Note ¹ The Grievance Procedure concerns a matter related to the terms and conditions of employment of a member of staff.