



COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

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Author: Frances Mullen, Deputy Principal

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Route for Approval: JUCC, Curriculum and Students, Full Board

1. Introduction

1.1 Portsmouth College welcomes feedback and actively encourages all those who use our services to express their views. It is our responsibility to:

- Listen to these views
- Record comments and compliments and pass these on
- Investigate any complaints as per our published timescales in this policy and take appropriate action where justified
- Periodically share all records and outcomes of comments, compliments and complaints with the Governing Body

This Policy is not for internal use in terms of complaints amongst staff. The Grievance Policy should be referred to in these circumstances.

2. Aims of the Policy

2.1 To record and pass on comments and compliments as appropriate. To respond to complaints in a professional and responsive manner, and to achieve 5 star customer service for all our students and customers. We are committed to:

- Dealing with complaints and comments fairly, promptly and effectively
- Using complaints, comments and compliments to review and improve our services

3. Objectives

3.1 In order to meet the aims of this policy, the college will ensure that the following objectives are met

- Record the number of comments, compliments and complaints each academic year - Collated by the PA to the Principal and periodically shared with the Governing Body
- Celebrate compliments made within the organisation and with relevant staff/teams
- Establish standards and procedures for dealing with complaints
- Feedback to students/apprentices/parents/employers/clients any outcomes of their complaint in accordance with our published timescales detailed in the procedures within this document
- Establish clear appeal procedures in respect of complaints
- To ensure Governors are aware of all correspondence and how it has been resolved in the circumstances of complaints
- Review the policy and procedures to ensure that it remains fit for purpose

4 Definitions

- 4.1 **Comment** - Feedback to the college on areas where improvements could be made that are deemed not to be a complaint
- 4.2 **Compliment** - Feedback to the college on a positive experience in relation to the services/support that has been provided to a student/parent or client
- 4.3 **Complaint** - Any expression of a grievance (either oral or written) arising from experience of a service that that has failed to meet expectations, or that a member of staff or student has behaved unprofessionally or inappropriately

5 How to submit a Comment, Compliment or Complaint

- 5.1 Please forward your Comment, Compliment or Complaint to the Principal's PA either via email or by letter:
Cara Wilcocks - cara.wilcocks@portsmouth-college.ac.uk
PA to the Principal
Portsmouth College
Tangier Rd
Portsmouth
P03 6PZ

6. Types of complaint

6.1 *Individual* - Students/Apprentices/Parents/Employers/Clients

These types of complaints made by individuals are dealt with according to the procedures set out in section 7 - Complaints Procedures

6.2 *Group Complaints from Students/Apprentices*

If a complaint is brought forward by a group of students/apprentices, then a spokesperson must be identified from this group. This spokesperson will be the point of contact for all correspondence. Each student/apprentice within the group must provide permission to the member of staff investigating the complaint, that the spokesperson is able to discuss the nature of the complaint on their behalf. Each member of the group must be able to demonstrate that they have been directly impacted by the matter that is at the centre of the complaint.

6.3 *Anonymous Complaints*

If a complaint has been made anonymously, then it is not possible to undertake an investigation. No action will normally be taken in the event of an anonymous complaint being made. However, the college reserves the right to conduct an investigation when it is deemed appropriate.

6.4 *Vexatious or Malicious Complaints made by Students*

If through an investigation of a complaint received by a student/apprentice or group of students/apprentices it transpires to be vexatious (*a complaint that is unsustainable*)

or malicious (*a complaint that attempts to bring the name of an individual/college into disrepute on unfounded grounds*), then the College may implement its disciplinary procedures.

7. Complaint Procedures

7.1 Stage 1 - Informal Complaint Procedure

It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved informally in the first instance. If a complaint concerns discriminatory behaviour, harassment or matters of a sensitive nature which you feel cannot be raised with the member of the College's staff concerned, the matter should be treated as formal and the steps in stage 2 should be followed.

The procedure for making an informal complaint differs depending on the individual/group initiating this stage.

- If you have a complaint, begin by discussing the problem directly with the member of staff concerned. Generally things can be sorted out at this stage

- If you are not satisfied you should contact the relevant line manager:
 - For 16-19 year old students this is the Learning Area Manager (LAM)
 - For E6, please contact the E6 Manager
 - For apprenticeships, adult students or employer please contact the Director of Adult Education & Apprenticeships
 - For pastoral/support and all other issues please contact the Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding in Room 15
 - If you are not a student, i.e parent, please contact the Principal's PA or use the Director of HR vanessa.chapman@portsmouth-college.ac.uk

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, then you are entitled to follow the formal complaint procedure as detailed in Stage 2

7.2 Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

If you remain unhappy with the outcome of Stage 1, please complete a registration form (**which can be downloaded from www.portsmouth-college.ac.uk**). This form requires the following detail:

- Full details of the complaint
- An explanation of the steps you have undertaken to try to resolve your complaint
- An explanation of why the responses you have received are not satisfactory
- Where applicable, the outcome you would like from raising the complaint
- Any supporting evidence (e.g. emails, notes of meetings, etc.).

This form will be submitted to the HR Director and an acknowledgement will be given within five working days of receiving the complaint.

A relevant senior or delegated manager will be assigned to investigate the complaint, this will include either meeting with you to take evidence from you or discussing your complaint with

you via telephone. This meeting/phone conversation should take place within 5 working days of receiving the complaint. You will receive a response from the investigating manager within ten working days of that meeting/conversation. The response will explain the outcome of the investigation and any actions to be taken. If the complaint is found to be unjustified the reasons will be given. A record of the complaint and actions will be kept.

8. Appeals Process

8.1 - Internal Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the response you may appeal in writing, via letter or email or via telephone to the Principal's PA, stating clearly your reasons for being unsatisfied with the original decision. You will be required to state clearly the reasons you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation into the original complaint. This might include matters of procedure/process, errors of fact or further information that has come to light. You are required to make any appeal within 10 working days of the date on the letter stating the original decision.

The Principal will consider your appeal, undertake any further investigations as required and inform you by letter of his decision within five working days.

8.2 - External Appeal

Should you be dissatisfied with the decision of the Principal you have the right to appeal to the Governing Body. You will need to make such an appeal within 10 days of the date on the letter from The Principal, clearly stating your reasons for this external appeal. Please note that these reasons need to relate to the role of the Governing Body in such an appeal namely: to ensure that procedures were followed, that an investigation was diligently carried out and that outcomes were appropriate. You should contact the Clerk to the Governors Karen Frost – this can be done by email or letter.

Lynda Dyne
Clerk to the Corporation
Portsmouth College Tangier Road Portsmouth
PO3 6PZ
karen.frost@tpc.ac.uk

If you would prefer to speak to a member of staff you should contact the Principal's P.A. on 023 9234 4390 who will be happy to take down your concern and pass the information to The Clerk to The Corporation.

The Governing Body will assign one Governor to hear this appeal. You should indicate, at this time, if you wish to meet with the relevant Governor in person. You should also include a daytime telephone number where we can contact you and an address where we should send the reply.

The Clerk to the Governors will forward the information to the Governor who will review the information and through the Clerk to the Governors arrange a meeting if requested. Following the review &/or meeting you will receive a written reply containing a decision or if the complaint is more complex a letter with a timetabled plan of action to resolve the issue within ten working days in term time and within three working weeks in holiday periods.

If you remain dissatisfied with the Governing Body's decision, you have the right to appeal to the College's main funding body the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Details of how to go about this can be found on the ESFA website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>

Reference

<u>Associated College Documents</u>	
Name of Document	Author
Step by step guide for dealing with complaints from students/parents against staff	HR Director
Grievance Procedure	HR Director