



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Christ the Redeemer College is committed to promoting a consistent and transparent approach to dealing with complaints. This policy sets out how complaints will be managed. It does not apply to academic appeals which are dealt with separately in the College's Academic Appeals Policy, nor does it apply where other processes are being followed, such as admissions appeals, student or staff disciplinary procedures or the staff grievance procedure. If the College receives a complaint which would more appropriately be dealt with as an academic appeal, the College may decide to follow the Academic Appeals Policy instead of or as well as the Complaints Policy.
- 1.2 The policy is intended to be used by students, partner organisations (including placement-providers or in the case of apprenticeships, employers), other service-users and members of the public.
- 1.3 The Complaints Policy will normally be used in complaints related to College operations, College operations, or an individual (members of staff or students).
- 1.4 The College's Complaints Policy is based on the following principles:
- Complaints should be considered and resolved as efficiently as possible;
 - At each stage of the process, the complaint should be considered by someone who has not been directly implicated in the complaint itself or involved in previous consideration of the complaint;
 - If the complaint relates to an individual member of staff, they have a right to know the nature and source of any complaint made against them;
 - Complaints will be dealt with having due regard for the handling of information of a potentially sensitive nature and the management of personal data in line with the College's Data Protection policy.
- 1.5 A group of students may make a collective complaint and should individually sign the written complaint. In such cases the group complaint will be treated as one complaint. In such circumstances, the College may communicate directly with some or all of the students individually, particularly where the substance or circumstances of the complaint differ, and to reach different decisions where this is deemed appropriate. In processing a group complaint, the College may ask the group to nominate one student to act as group representative, to communicate on the group's behalf with the College and to liaise with the other students. All of the other students involved in the group complaint will be asked to confirm whether the nominated group representative is acceptable to them.

2. Informal Resolution

- 2.1 When issues arise, they can usually be dealt with informally, minimising stress and saving time. Such issues can often be resolved most effectively by raising them directly with the member(s) of staff with responsibility for the area of work that the complaint relates to. In the first instance, every effort should be made to resolve issues in this way, where this is appropriate.

3. Formal Complaints Procedure

- 3.1 The College has a three-stage process for dealing with complaints:
- 3.2 At all stages of the complaints process, the College will gather and record evidence, ensuring there is a clear audit trail of evidence gathered and decisions made.
- 3.3 Where a complaint is upheld, the College will offer what it deems to be an appropriate remedy.

4. Stage 1 – Investigation

- 4.1 If the matter cannot be resolved informally a complaint should be made in writing, within 28 days of the incident or event to which the complaint relates, to the Compliance and HR Manager, who will acknowledge receipt. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Compliance and HR Manager will consider which of the College's procedures is the most appropriate mechanism for resolving the issue raised and may refer the matter accordingly.
- 4.2 An initial response to any complaint will be made within seven days of its receipt, and a considered response to the complaint will be made within a further 21 days, with any subsequent remedy implemented with the minimum of delay.
- 4.3 At the outset the complainant will be invited to suggest the remedy they are seeking, without prejudice to the outcome.
- 4.4 The Compliance and HR Manager will investigate the complaint, including gathering evidence from all of the parties concerned and will then write to the Complainant, and the other parties involved, stating the conclusion of the investigation and the proposed remedy.
- 4.5 In some cases, the informal procedure set out above may have already involved the Compliance and HR Manager. In that case, or if the complaint is against the Compliance and HR Manager, the complaint should be made in writing to the College Rector / Head of Centre.

5. Stage 2 – Internal Review by the Complaints Panel

- 5.1 If the complainant is not satisfied, the complainant may refer their complaint to the College's Complaints Panel to undertake an independent review of the case. The complainant should make this request to the Rector / Head of Centre within 14 days of receiving the considered response from Stage 1 and should state the reason why they remain dissatisfied with the previous attempt(s) to resolve the complaint.
- 5.2 The College's Complaints Panel should meet to consider the complainant's request within 14 days of the request being received and should seek to conclude the internal review process within a further 14 days by writing to the complainant to communicate the outcome of the internal review process.

6. Stage 3 – Appeal to the Appeals Committee

- 6.1 If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may appeal to the Appeals Committee. The complainant should make this request to the Rector / Head of Centre within 7 days of receiving the response from Stage 2 and should state the reason why they remain dissatisfied with the previous attempt(s) to resolve the complaint. It should be noted that this stage will not involve the original complaint being re-investigated unless new evidence is presented. Rather at Stage 3, the original complaint and any previous investigations will be independently reviewed to ensure that appropriate procedures have been followed and to consider

whether previous decisions were reasonable. The process should be completed within 28 days of the request being made.

6.2 It is the College's intention that at each stage complaints should be considered by people who have not been involved previously. Therefore, it may be necessary for the College to appoint an external reviewer to undertake investigative work or review previous decisions on behalf of the committee with responsibility for responding to the complaint at that stage. The College may also offer external mediation as a mechanism for resolving a complaint.

7. Stage 4 – External Review

7.1 If all three formal stages of the College's internal complaints process have been exhausted and the complaint still remains dissatisfied, they may refer the complaint to the relevant awarding organisation or regulatory body. It should be noted that the matter should not be referred externally until all of the College's internal processes have been exhausted and completion of procedures letter issued.

7.2 Enclosed with the completion of procedures letter will be information for the complainant to enable them to contact the relevant awarding organisation or regulatory body as well as a copy of the policy / procedure that should be followed.

8. Overview of the Complaints Process

8.1

Stage of the Process	Who is responsible for dealing with the complaint at this stage	Responsibilities	Timescales
Informal resolution	Individual member(s) of staff with whom the issue(s) has been raised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of staff work with the Complainant(s) to resolve issues. 	As soon as possible after the incident or event concerned has taken place / the issue has been apparent.
Stage 1 – Investigation	Compliance and HR Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the complaint, including gathering evidence from all of the parties involved. Write to all parties stating the conclusion of the investigation. Implement response / remedy. 	Complaint to be made within 28 days. Initial response within 7 days. Further response (if required) within a further 21 days.
Stage 2 – Internal Review	Complainant should write to the Rector / Head of Centre who will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the evidence gathered at Stage 1, the resulting decision, review the proposed response / remedy. Write to all parties stating the conclusion of the internal review process. 	Request for internal review of the complaint to be made within 14 days of being notified of the outcome of Stage 1. A meeting of the Complaints Panel to be held within 14 days with the process completed within a further 14 days.

8.1

Stage of the Process	Who is responsible for dealing with the complaint at this stage	Responsibilities	Timescales
Stage 3 – Appeal	Complainant should write to the Rector / Head of Centre for consideration by the College’s Appeals Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent review of the decisions made at earlier stages of the process. Completion of Procedures letter issued. 	Appeal to the Appeals Committee to be made within 7 days of being notified of the outcome of Stage 2. Completion of the appeal process within 28 days of the appeal request being made.
Stage 4 – External Review	Awarding Organisation or Regulatory Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External review undertaken according to the policy of the respective awarding organisation / body. 	The timescales specified in the policy of the awarding organisation to be adhered to by all parties.

9. Communication

- 9.1 Any correspondence from the College shall be deemed to have been delivered 48 hours after an email has been sent. The College must be informed of any changes of email address.
- 9.2 The College’s preferred means of correspondence is email as it enables communication that is timely and efficient. The College should be notified if a complainant prefers correspondence to be by letter.

10. Resolution

- 10.1 At any of the formal stages, the outcome of a complaint shall consist of the decision (i.e. upheld, partially upheld, not upheld, unable to substantiate) and a proposed remedy and/or action to be taken. However, any future disciplinary outcome relating to the conduct of a member of staff is a confidential matter between the member of staff and the College’s Senior Management Team and will not be disclosed to complainant.
- 10.2 As the College is committed to continuous improvement in service provision, those involved in reviewing complaints will be invited to make recommendations to change processes and/or procedures to mitigate against the future reoccurrence of problems of a similar nature.
- 10.3 This policy is intended to promote a consistent and transparent approach to dealing with complaints, to seek resolution and to reduce the likelihood of complaints becoming protracted or vexatious. If a complainant attempts to reopen the same issue, a letter will be sent to them to explain that the complaint has been through all stages of the procedure and that the matter is now closed.
- 10.4 At the end of the process, the complainant(s) will receive a ‘Completion of procedures’ letter.

11. Processing Personal Data

- 11.1 The College will keep written records of all formal complaints and their outcomes. Throughout any formal complaints proceedings, a written record of all meetings and all documentation shall be kept so as to ensure that there is an audit trail and that all of the evidence can subsequently be made available should this be required.

- 11.2 The College acknowledges that at times complaints can involve disclosure of sensitive information. The College is committed to handling such information with discretion, involving other staff only on a need-to-know basis. All personal data will be handled in line with the College's Data Protection Policy.
- 11.3 As noted above, if a complaint relates to individual members of staff, they have a right to know the nature and source of a complaint made against them, as this is likely to be necessary in order for there to be a fair investigation.
- 11.4 All complaints raised by students will be kept on file while they remain a student at the College and for 12 months after they have left.

12. Approval and Review

Title: Complaints Policy

Approved with reference to: QAA Quality Code, Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Students in Higher Education – The Good Practice Framework: Handling Student Complaints and Academic Appeals.

Version: 2020.2. **Approved:** January 2021. **Implementation from:** January 2021. **Next review:** August 2021.

Approving body: Academic Board. **Member of staff responsible:** Compliance and HR Manager