

Young Options College

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy Statement

Young Options Pathway College encourages all of its young people, and anyone who comes into contact with our services, to raise any matter about which they are unhappy or feel they have cause for complaint. Every complainant has the right to expect to be treated fairly, politely and without prejudice. Anybody making a complaint will not be victimised in any way. We resolve to investigate every issue fully and seek a satisfactory conclusion in all cases.

Aims

Young Options College takes a pride in the quality of teaching and pastoral care that are provided to its students. However, if parents or carers do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the College in accordance with this Procedure. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them; where disclosure is required in the course of the College's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Practice and Procedure

This procedure is based on the model recommended by the Independent Schools Council and meets the requirements of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2003 and the Children Act 1989.

Stages

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If a young person or parent/ carer has a complaint they should normally contact the Form Tutor in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means, to the parent/ carer's satisfaction. If the Tutor cannot resolve the problem alone, it may be necessary for him/ her to consult the Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher.
- Complaints made directly to the Head Teacher will usually be referred to the relevant Tutor unless it is deemed appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
- The Tutor/ relevant teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. The complainant will receive acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint within one working day, with an explanation of the procedure to be followed, including time scales. Should the matter not be fully resolved within 3 working days, or in the event that the Tutor/ teacher and the parent/ carer is unable to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents/ carers will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents/ carers should put their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher. After considering the complaint, the Head Teacher will decide on the course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head Teacher will meet or speak to the parents/ carers concerned within 2 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head Teacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made. Parents/ carers will be informed in writing of the decision, together with reasons for the decision, within 5 working days.
- If parents/ carers are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure by putting their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

- If parents/ carers seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Proprietor, who has been appointed to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the College. The complaint will be acknowledged and a hearing scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days. Parents/ carers will be given at least 5 working days notice of the date of the hearing, with an invitation to attend. They will be informed that they may bring with them a relative, teacher or friend if they wish. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 3 days prior the hearing.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parent/ carer's complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents/ carers (sent by electronic mail or otherwise) informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing (by electronic mail or otherwise) to the parents/ carers, the Head Teacher, the Proprietor and, where relevant, the person of whom the complaint was raised. They will be available for inspection on the College premises by the Head Teacher.

Parents/ carers may also contact OfSTED if they believe that the Panel have acted unreasonably in dealing with the complaint. Parents/ carers should write, detailing the steps already taken and the responses received, to the Independent and Boarding Team, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 9BG.

- Written records of complaints will be kept in a central file which will indicate whether they were resolved through the complaints procedure, or proceeded to a panel hearing.
- Correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential (except for statutory disclosures).
- Young People should also be given information about where to seek help if needed:

VCC Midlands (Voice for the Child in Care): **01902 576360**

NSPCC Helpline: **0800 800 500**

CHILDLINE: **0800 1111**

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher

Approved by the Head Teacher: _____

Proprietor: _____

Date: January 2014

Reviewed Annually