

## Brampton College Complaints Procedure

### Aim

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that a concern or complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level, and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice, it is fair to those concerned and it helps to promote parents' and students' confidence in our ability to safeguard and promote welfare. We will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, reviewing our systems and procedures in light of the circumstances.

We need to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. Parents and students should never feel - or be made to feel - that a complaint will be taken amiss or will adversely affect a student or their opportunities at this College. The complaints procedure is available to all parents of students and of prospective students on the College's website and in the College office during the College day.

### Complaints Procedure

#### *What constitutes a complaint?*

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the College as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the College is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the College has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The College is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your son/daughter raises in good faith.

The Complaints procedure has three levels.

#### **Level 1 - Informal Resolution**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Personal Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Personal Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone then it may be necessary for the Personal Tutor to consult other senior members of staff including a Head of Department (about a subject specific matter), the Head of Year (about a pastoral or general academic matter) or Vice Principal / Assistant Vice Principal if it is needed. However, owing to the Principal's (and, to an

extent, the Senior Director's) close day-to-day involvement in the College, the majority of students and parents know them well and therefore it is acknowledged that concerns are often raised directly with them, but are resolved informally.

- The member of staff receiving a complaint will notify the Principal's PA who will record the complaint, whether resolved or unresolved, and place it as an item for discussion on the agenda of the SLT meeting in the week the complaint is received. Following discussion in the SLT meeting, the Principal's PA will write to parents to notify them of any decision or of the need for further investigation and notify parents of the informal and formal levels of the complaints procedure. If there is a need for further investigation, parents should usually expect to hear from the College within five working days of the PA's letter, depending on circumstances including the length of time required to conduct a suitable investigation. Should the matter not be resolved at this informal stage, parents may choose to raise their complaint to Level Two – Formal Resolution (see below).
- If the complaint is against the Principal and they have been unable to offer adequate reassurance on the matter, or if the parents deem it inappropriate to raise it with them directly, they may choose to escalate the matter / make their complaint to Bernard Canetti, Senior Director of Brampton College via his PA.

## **Level 2 - Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Principal. Note that parents wishing to make a formal complaint may be asked to complete the college's Formal Complaint Form. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Principal will contact the parents concerned by telephone or arrange a meeting in person within five working days of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter. On occasion, parents may instead wish to meet the Principal at a later time, for instance at a forthcoming parents evening. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations. If so, a reasonable timescale will be indicated as to when these investigations will be concluded. At the end of this period a letter will then be sent to parents or a meeting arranged in which the Principal's decision will be communicated or new proposals discussed.
- The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established and parents have been properly consulted, a decision will be made

and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Principal will also give reasons for their decision.

- If the formal complaint is against the Principal and they have not (in the parents' view) provided adequate reassurance / accepted outcome, Bernard Canetti, Senior Director of Brampton College, will call for a full report from the Principal and for all the relevant documents. He may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once he is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. He will give reasons for his decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Level 3 of this procedure.

### **Level 3 - Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Level 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Principal's PA, who has been appointed by Brampton Educational Services to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the College. The Principal's PA, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 20 working days.
- 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 five working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish which may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint 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 facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within five working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required

if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Principal. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the College premises by the Principal.

### **Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints**

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the College's aim is to resolve complaints at the first level within 10 working days and the second level of the procedure within 20 working days. Level 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days. Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, 'working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time. Please also be aware that the timeframes above may be extended depending on the seriousness and / or complexity of the complaint.

Please note that complaints raised during or close to college holiday periods may be subject to delays in responding and / or the investigation process.

### **Recording Complaints**

Following resolution of a complaint, the College will keep a written record of all complaints reported to the PA to the Principal, whether they are resolved at the informal level, the formal level or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the College as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the College's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of person raising the complaint and relationship to student
- Name of student
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage

- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them. Data will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into effect on 25 May 2018.

### **Number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding academic year**

In 2024-25, there were 3 complaints under the formal procedure which were resolved without proceeding to level 3.