

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Aims and Objectives .....	2
Our Commitment to You .....	2
What You Can Complain about .....	3
The Complaints Process .....	3
How to raise a concern or make a complaint? .....	3
Stage 1- Front Line Resolution .....	3
Stage 2- Investigation of a Formal Complaint .....	3
Stage 3- Complaint heard by Senior Manager .....	3
Stage 4- Appeals .....	4
Complaint Form .....	5
Learning from Complaints.....	6
Malicious Complaints.....	6
Getting help to make your complaint.....	6
Appendix A - what you can complain about.....	7
Appendix B - How complaints are categorised.....	8
Appendix C - Post Complaints Service Questionnaire.....	9

## 1. Introduction

St David's Catholic College is committed to providing a high quality of education to all its learners. We believe that at our College provides an excellent education for all its learners, and that the staff work hard to build positive relationships with its learners, parents and other stakeholders. However, the College is committed to having procedures in place in case there are any complaints about the level of service experienced. It is therefore important to us that concerns are raised as soon as possible to allow us to deal with them in a timely manner.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The College aims to be fair and open when dealing with any complaints. We will give full and careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible, striving to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases, we put the interest of the learner at the forefront in providing sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and then resolved.

## 3. Our Commitment to You

- We will ensure that raising a concern or making a formal complaint is as easy as possible.
- We will treat all concerns and complaints seriously.
- Any complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- We will deal with the concern or complaint promptly, thoroughly and impartially.
- We will keep you up to date with the progress at each stage.
- We will respond in the right way- with an explanation or an apology, if appropriate.
- We will tell you what actions will be taken to put things right.
- All complaints will be recorded on a complaints log and will be reported to the governing body on a regular basis.
- We will learn from concerns raised and complaints made and use them to improve our service.

*Whilst we will handle all complaints discreetly, if a complaint is made about a member of staff, we will need to share the concerns with them as part of the investigation, and invite their view of what happened.*

## 4. How the College Defines a Complaint

The college define a complaint as

‘An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more learners or stakeholders on their behalf, about the College’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the College’.

## 5. What You Can Complain about

You can make a complaint about any aspect of our services including teaching and training, support and services, advice and guidance and College facilities. You can also complain if you feel you have been treated unfairly or inappropriately. See appendix A for the types of thing you can make a complaint about and those you can’t.

## The Complaints Process - How to raise a concern or make a complaint.

### Stage 1 - Front Line Resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong and immediate action to resolve the problem. This where issues are straightforward and easily resolved, requiring little or no investigation and we want to try and sort out your concerns as soon as possible.

The best way to deal with these is usually straight away with the staff directly concerned, so if possible please talk to the member of staff involved as they may be able to sort things out for you immediately. Concerns about courses can be dealt with by the Course Tutor or Pastoral Tutor. Concerns about learner support can be dealt with by the Vice Principal for Student Experience. If you are not sure who to speak to, contact Mr Horgan in M13 who will be able to advise you.

If we cannot get your problem dealt with informally, contact Mr Horgan (Vice Principal) mhorgan@stdavidscollege.ac.uk who will make a record of your concern and initiate the full formal complaints procedure.

### Stage 2- Making a Formal Complaint

If you are wish for the complaint to be formally investigated the nature of the complaint should then be recorded on the Complaints Form below. All formal complaints are reported to Mr Horgan (Vice Principal). The complaint form will then be logged on the complaints database.

### Stage 3- Investigation of a Formal Complaint

Once the complaint has been logged, the relevant senior manager will investigate the issue thoroughly and fairly. The Vice Principal will respond in writing to the complainant within 10 working days of receiving the complaint (excluding the Christmas and summer shutdown period). The complainant (learner or parent) will be invited to meet with the

senior manager to discuss the matter fully before a decision and cause of action is decided. Once a course of action is decided then the complainant will be informed of this in writing, along with a notification of the right to appeal.

#### Stage 4 - Appeals

If the complainant (learner or parent) is not satisfied with the response received to a complaint or the outcome of the complaint, the complainant can appeal to the Principal in writing. The address is:

*Mr Mark Leighfield  
Principal  
St David's Catholic College  
Ty Gwyn Road  
Penylan  
Cardiff  
CF23 5QD*

The complainant will be invited to attend a meeting with the Principal, or a designated Senior Manager within 10 working days of the College receiving your request.

**NB.** In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Principal, or a member of the governing body, the Chair of Governors will arrange for the matter to be investigated.

## Formal Complaint Form

<b>Name of complainant</b>	
<b>Contact details</b>	
<b>Relationship to College (<i>e.g. father of current student</i>)</b>	
<b>Student Name (if applicable) and tutor</b>	
<b>Date of notification of complaint</b>	
<b>Nature of complaint</b>	
<b>What would you like to happen as a result of your complaint?</b>	

*This policy has been impact assessed to ensure that it complies with all aspects of the Equality and Diversity legislation.*

## **6. Learning from Complaints**

The college will;

- Use complaints data to identify the cause of complaints
- Take action to reduce the risk of recurrence
- Categorise complaints in order of seriousness to determine trends in complaints & its impact on the organisation
- Record the details of outcomes and corrective action in the complaints database, and
- Survey users to determine the fitness for purpose of the complaint's policy. This is administered 6 weeks after the closure of the complaint. See appendix C.
- Annually review the complaints policy to ensure improved service delivery.

## **7. Malicious Complaints**

Where the College has investigated a complaint and the outcome is that the complaint is malicious, the College reserves the right to consider whether to bring action against the complainant if false statements and/or allegations have been made.

Where it is likely that a learner of the College has made false statements and/or allegations against the College or its members of staff, then the matter may be further pursued under the Learner Disciplinary Policy.

## **8. Getting help to make your complaint**

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend or relative, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

We are committed to making our services easy to use for everyone. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure we make reasonable adjustments to help customers access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, please contact Mr Horgan (Vice Principal) in M13.

## APPENDIX A

### What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- ❖ A failure to provide a service, or an inadequate quality or standard of service
- ❖ The admissions process
- ❖ The disciplinary process
- ❖ A request for a service or for information, which we have not actioned or answered
- ❖ Our policies
- ❖ Wrong information about academic programmes or our services
- ❖ The quality and availability of facilities and learning resources
- ❖ Accessibility of our buildings or services
- ❖ The behaviour of a learner, member of staff or contractor
- ❖ Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor
- ❖ Disagreement with a decision where you cannot use another procedure, e.g. appeal
- ❖ Our failure to follow the proper administrative process

Your complaint may involve more than one college service or be about someone working on our behalf, such as a contractor.

### What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- ❖ A routine first-time request for a service
- ❖ A request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- ❖ A disagreement with academic judgement
- ❖ A claim for compensation against the college
- ❖ Issues that are in a court of law or have already been heard by a court or tribunal
- ❖ Disagreement with a decision where a right of appeal exists, e.g. Learner Appeals Policy
- ❖ A request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information Act
- ❖ A grievance by a member of staff
- ❖ An attempt to have the college open up or reconsider a complaint we have concluded or given our final decision on.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help.



## APPENDIX B

### ❖ Categorisation of Complaints For Analysis

Action	Rating	Criteria	Example complaint/issues
Complaints Procedure	Red	Serious complaints which are likely to have a reputational impact on the college, or where the complaint is so bad that it destroys the college/ student and/or learner/peer relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hate crime</li> <li>• Sexual harassment</li> <li>• Persistent systematic bullying or bullying of a more serious nature</li> <li>• Abusive language/threats</li> <li>• Carrying of offensive weapons</li> <li>• Being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol), in possession of drugs or buying or selling drugs on the college premises</li> </ul>
	Amber	Complaints which are likely to have a negative impact on the student experience, e.g. where the college fails, or continues to fail to provide a service or an inadequate quality or standard of service. Or, where learner/staff behaviour provides a cause for concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unacceptable level of service:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A request for a service or for information which has not been actioned or answered</li> <li>✓ Admissions process</li> <li>✓ Disciplinary process</li> <li>✓ Poor or ineffective teaching practice</li> <li>✓ Quality and availability of facilities and learning resources</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Course delivery, content, assessment &amp; exam preparation</li> <li>• Behaviour of a member of staff or contractor</li> <li>• Learner's behaviour in college and/or neighbourhood</li> </ul>
	Green	Where issues are likely to have a minimal impact on the student experience and which are straightforward and easily resolved, requiring little or no investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First time request for a service or for information, e.g. grants</li> <li>• Boisterous/inappropriate behaviour, e.g. dropping litter, not clearing tables, language</li> <li>• Cancelled lectures, trips</li> <li>• College closures</li> </ul>

Note: For learners also refer to prospective learners, learners, parents, employers, members of the public and other stakeholders.

## Appendix C

### Post Complaint Questionnaire

The quality of service that we provide is important to us. To help improve our Complaints Procedure could you please complete this short anonymous questionnaire? The feedback you provide will be used solely to learn more about how we handle complaints and will not be linked to your original complaint.

How would you rate the college's complaints procedure for each of the following ...? (Please tick one box for each statement)

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Knowing how to make a complaint?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A procedure which was easy to understand & follow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informing you of how & when your complaint would be dealt by?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigating your complaint thoroughly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did we keep to our timescales?

	Yes	I'm unsure	No
Did you receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within 10 working days of it being received by the college?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you receive a full written response to your complaint within 15 working days of that date?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If not, were you contacted to explain the reasons for the delay?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appeals – please answer the following if you appealed against the decision

	Yes	I'm unsure	No
Did you receive a result of the appeal within 15 working days?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Would you like to add any comment about the procedure or any suggestions for improving it?

(Please continue on the other side if needed)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire  
Please return to: Alwyn Lloyd Assistant Principal, Room M5, St David's Catholic College, Ty Gwyn Road, Cardiff  
CF23 5QD