



**Harrison College Ltd**

**Complaints Policy**

A complaint can be made verbally or in writing and can be made against a student, a member of staff, a Director or a College Stakeholder.

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with in accordance with the College's Complaints procedure.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 We strive to provide a good education for all our students. Staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all Parents/Guardians/Carers and Stakeholders. However, the College is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints. The following policy sets out the procedures that the College follows in such cases.
- 1.2 If any Parents/Guardians/Carers or Stakeholders are unhappy with the education that their young person is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the College, we encourage them to contact the College immediately to relay their concerns to the appropriate person.
- 1.3 The appropriate person will depend on the nature of the concern, the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in your concern.
- 1.4 Concerns are best raised as early as possible. The earlier you raise a concern, the easier it is to investigate and take action on.
- 1.5 All Parents/Guardians/Carers have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

- 2.1 The College aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with a complaint.
- 2.2 We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases where it includes a young person, we put the interests of the young person above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

## **3. The Complaints Process and stages**

- 3.1 The complaints process can be looked at by following informal and formal processes. There are stages within each one of these. Ideally the complaint will be first looked at during an initial discussion where it will be agreed that there is no further need to pursue the concern into a complaint (1.2 above). However, the circumstance and nature of the complaint may mean that the complaint can be dealt with at any stage on the complaint's procedure (stage 1-4)
- 3.2 **Initial discussion:** Regardless of stage, where a Parent/Guardian/Carer or Stakeholder is concerned about anything to do with the progress or well-being of a student at the College, they should, in the first instance, bring the matter to the attention of the college where a discussion will be had. In our experience, most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All staff work very hard to ensure that each student is happy at the College and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that the College can take action before it seriously affects the young person's progress. At this initial discussion stage with a member of the college staff, it is anticipated a resolution can be agreed, if not, the complainant will inform the member of staff at the end of the meeting, or by notifying the college within 24hrs, and request that the complaint is referred to stage 1 informal.
- 3.3 **Stage 1 informal;** this is where an appropriate person will be allocated to look further into the complaint and may comprise of a face to face or telephone meeting with the complainant to gain further understanding or detail.
- 3.4 **Stage 2 informal;** In the case of a resolution not being agreed after the outcome of stage 1 has been communicated, the Principal or another senior member of staff will investigate this complaint further. The complainant will have 1 week to request it moves to stage 2. Most

complaints are normally resolved with the involvement of the Principal or senior leader following a meeting of all parties concerned.

- 3.5 **Stage 3 formal;** Where the informal process has not produced an agreed outcome, stage 3 will consist of the complaint being dealt with formally by a Director (or Principal if they were not involved in stage 2). The complainant must inform the Board of Directors within 1 week of the stage 2 informal outcome being communicated to them.
- 3.6 **Stage 4 formal;** this will be the appeal stage. The appeal will consist of an Independent Review of the complaint by two further members of the Board or an agreed external appropriate professional. The Appeal will be conducted, and the student, parents/carers or stakeholder will be invited to a meeting to discuss the case and put forward their reasons for appeal.
- 3.7 Depending on the nature or severity of the complaint, it may be deemed necessary to implement a Suspension of the Student while the matter is investigated. This will require the authorisation of a Director and could be sanctioned for 1 to 3 days. If the Parent/Guardian/Carer or Stakeholder is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation and decides to make an Appeal this may be requested in writing within 14 days of the initial outcome being confirmed.
- 3.8 Where necessary the Board may consult with the LA if the student's continued placement at the College is at risk. In the event that the original decision is upheld and, in the worst case scenario, it is the dismissal of a student from College due to the severity of the complaint, the College will call an urgent Statutory Review of the student's EHCP and advise the LA that Harrison College is no longer a suitable placement.
- 3.9 Should any Parent/Guardian/Carer or College Stakeholder have a complaint about a member of Harrison College staff, they should first make an informal approach to the Principal (unless the complaint is about the Principal, in which case one of the members of the Board of Directors should be approached), who is obliged to investigate it.
  - 3.9.1 **Initial discussion (informal stage);** The Principal (or Director in question) will do all they can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the College, but if the Parent/ Guardian/Carer or Stakeholder is unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.
  - 3.9.2 **Formal complaint;** Only if the informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made and dealt with by the Board of directors.
    - 3.9.2.1 This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the College has dealt with the complaint so far.
    - 3.9.2.2 The Parent/Guardian/Carer or Stakeholder should send this written complaint to the Board of Directors.
    - 3.9.2.3 The Board of Directors must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. The Board will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting so that they can explain the complaint in more detail.
    - 3.9.2.4 The College will give the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.
    - 3.9.2.5 After hearing all the evidence, the Directors will consider their decision and inform the Parent/Guardian/Carer or Stakeholder of the outcome/their decision in writing. The Directors will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint.

**Independent review:** A further meeting will be chaired by an independent person(s), who will consider all the evidence and make a final judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.

- 3.10 If any Parent/Guardian/Carer is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then they are entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

#### **4. Monitoring and Review**

- 4.1 The Principal will log all complaints received by the College, and record how they were resolved.
- 4.2 The Directors will monitor the complaints procedure in order to ensure all complaints are dealt with properly.
- 4.3 Directors will receive a report and examine this log on a termly basis.
- 4.4 Directors will consider any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process and will make any modifications necessary to this policy.
- 4.5 This policy is made available to all Parents/Guardians/Carers and Stakeholders at the point of a concern being raised so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.
- 4.6 The complainant will be signposted to the Harrison College website where a live version will always be available
- 4.7 A paper copy can also be requested as well as formats in different languages
- 4.8 This Policy will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.