

# Complaints Procedure

Adopted: Autumn 2017

Review Date: Summer 2020

**Purpose:** To establish a procedure for dealing with complaints relating to Great Oaks College (GOC)

**Scope:** All matters relating to the actions of staff and application of College procedures where they affect the individual students concerned.

## **General Principles:**

- At Great Oaks College we seek to provide a high quality professional service to students and families at all times. We welcome comments and wish to work with our families to improve our school.
- Any complaint will be taken seriously and where action is needed this will be taken quickly. If there is no appropriate action that can be or needs to be taken parents will be informed of the reasons.
- To allow for a proper investigation, complaints should be brought to the attention of the College as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than 3 months after the event being complained of will not be considered, save in exceptional circumstances.
- All complaints will be dealt with within 5 days of being received so far as this is possible.
- Anonymous complaints cannot be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## **Part A Complaining about the actions of a member of staff other than the Head of College.**

### **1) Informal Stage**

It is hoped that most complaints can be dealt with informally. Anyone wishing to make a complaint should speak to a member of the College senior leadership team; a Head of Department, Assistant Head, Deputy or the Head of College. They will try to resolve the issue as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of the complainant.

### **2) Formal Stage**

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage the complaint should be put in writing to the Head of College, who will be responsible for holding a formal investigation. The investigation will take an appropriate form depending on the nature of the complaint.

The investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Some details may then be given of action the College may be taking to review procedures, details of the investigation or of any disciplinary procedures will not be released

The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint is now finished.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, they may request that the Board of GOC review the process followed by the Head of College in handling the complaint. This must be made in writing within 2 weeks of receiving notice of the outcome from the Head of College. The procedure described in Part C will be followed.

If the complainant considers that the decision of the Head of College is incorrect or that the Head of College has acted unreasonably in considering the complaint, then the complainant may bring a complaint against the Head of College under part B of this procedure.

## **Part B Complaining about the actions of the Head of College in dealing with a complaint**

### **1) Informal stage**

It is expected that most complaints will be dealt with informally. The complainant should arrange to speak directly with the Head of College. In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to raise them directly with the Chair of the Board of GOC.

### **2) Formal Stage**

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage the complaint should be put in writing to the Chair of the board of GOC, who will be responsible for holding a formal investigation. The investigation will take an appropriate form depending on the nature of the complaint.

The Head of College will be provided with a copy of the complaint. Once there has been an opportunity for the Head of College to consider this, he/she will be invited to meet separately with the Chair, and to present written a response.

When the investigation has been concluded, the complainant and the Head of College will be informed in writing of the outcome. The complainant will not be informed of any disciplinary or capability action.

The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Chair is now finished.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, or thinks that the decision of the Chair is incorrect, or that the Chair has acted unreasonably in considering the complaint, then the complainant may request that the Governing Body review the handling of the complaint by the Chair. This request must be made in writing within 2 weeks of receiving notice of the outcome from the Chair, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures.

## **Part C Review Process**

Any review of the process followed by the Head of College or the Chair shall be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the Board.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations should be considered.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant.

The panel will then invite the Head of College or the Chair, as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

The complainant, and the Head of College or the Chair, as appropriate, will be informed in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full but that the procedural failure did not affect the outcome significantly so the matter is now closed.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full and the Board will take steps to prevent a recurrence or to rectify the situation where this is practicable

The complainant is not entitled to access to any details of the investigation except for any statements that may have been provided by their young person. Any information relating to the application of disciplinary procedures is strictly confidential.

The complainant may complain to the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if they remain unhappy with the outcome. Guidance on how to do this is available from the ESFA website:  
[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure).

## Complaint Form

### Great Oaks College Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the Head of College / Clerk to Governing Body, who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

A letter will also be acceptable in making a formal complaint. If E mailing a letter it should include the same information as the form.

Your name: .....

Relationship with College [e.g. parent of a student on the College's roll ]:  
.....

Student's name [ if relevant to your complaint ]:  
.....

Your Address:

Daytime telephone number: .....

Evening telephone number: .....

e-mail .....

Please give details of your complaint, [including dates, names of witnesses etc...], to allow the matter to be fully investigated.

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional paperwork, if you

wish.

Number of additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? [i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?]

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

College use:

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:			
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Date:			
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## Model Response to spurious complainant

Dear

Following receipt of your communications and careful consideration of the same, I regret that I am unable to deal with this matter under the Board of Great Oaks College General Complaints Procedure as:  
[Please select appropriate wording from the following]

- You have not identified any specific actions of which you might complain
- Your concerns are presented as conclusions rather than specific actions of which you complain.
- The concerns that you identify relate to historical actions and any evidence which might have enabled an objective investigation of your complaint is no longer available.
- The substance of your complaint has been addressed under this procedure already.
- The concerns that you raise do not fall within the scope of this procedure.
- You have not identified any potential sources of evidence which might allow the matter to be investigated.
- The College offered to resolve the matter informally and in my judgement you refused unreasonably to take advantage of this.

If you wish my decision to be reviewed then you may take advantage of the procedure outlined in Annex 3 of the complaints procedure, by writing to the Clerk to the Board of Great Oaks College.

Yours sincerely,

Head of College  
or Chair of Board of Great Oaks College

Model letter of  
**NOTIFICATION OF DECISION REGARDING GENERAL PARENTAL COMPLAINT**

Dear

Following receipt of your complaint and careful consideration of all the available relevant evidence, I have concluded that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld. If you are able to provide additional evidence forthwith I/we will reconsider this decision.

**OR**

- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence in that .....

**OR**

- The concern was substantiated in part/in full, as ..... The school will review its practices/procedures..... with the intention of avoiding any recurrence. Parents will be informed in due course of any policy changes.

**OR**

- In order to address fully the matters investigated, the school has initiated appropriate internal procedures. Due to the nature of these procedures, their outcome must remain strictly confidential. We are confident, however, that the circumstances that gave rise to your complaint should not recur.

I hope that we may now put this matter behind us and work together for the benefit of your child's progress.

Yours truly

Head of College

or Chair of Board of Great Oaks College

## Model REVIEW OUTCOME NOTIFICATION

Dear

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the General Complaints Procedure was followed appropriately in respect of your complaint in that .....

Therefore, the matter is now closed as far as the school is concerned.

**Or**

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the Head Teacher/ Chair of Governors followed the General Complaints Procedure except .....

Therefore, the following action will be taken .....

Once this action has been completed the school will consider the matter to be closed.

**Or**

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the Head Teacher/ Chair of Governors followed the General Complaints Procedure except that .....

We have determined that this procedural failure did not affect the outcome of the consideration of your complaint so, while we regret this error, we will now consider this matter to be closed as far as the school is concerned.

Yours truly

Chair of Complaints Review Panel

c.c. Head of College  
Chair of Board of Great Oaks College