

Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure

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	Committee		
	Board		June 2025
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Linked policies/ documents			

Policy Summary

The Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure sets out Newbury College’s commitment to handling concerns and complaints fairly, promptly, and objectively, using feedback to improve services. It applies to issues relating to academic and support services, staff behaviour, and misleading information, excluding admissions, disciplinary, academic appeals, and whistleblowing, which are covered separately.

Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Policy Statement and Purpose

Newbury College is committed to delivering high-quality services to all students, clients, and community members. This policy outlines the College's approach to handling concerns and complaints, ensuring they are dealt with fairly, promptly, and objectively. The policy aims to use feedback to improve services and maintain a positive and responsive environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and structured approach to handling concerns and complaints from students, stakeholders and members of the public, ensuring they are resolved effectively and efficiently.

Scope

The policy applies to concerns and complaints related to academic services, support services, staff behaviour, and any misleading information about the College's services.

The Complaints Policy does not cover appeals related to the College's admissions process, student discipline, academic assessment appeals and whistleblowing. These are covered in separate policies, available on the College's website.

2. Definitions

Complainant: The person making the complaint.

Respondent: The person or department against whom the complaint is made.

ED&I: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

3. Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the Concerns and Complaints Policy is held by the Deputy Principal. The College expect leaders and managers at all levels to work with students and stakeholders to resolve concerns as soon as they arise. Where this is not possible, and the need arises to formally investigate and respond to concerns and complaints, then the Deputy Principal will be responsible for ensuring this policy is followed.

4. Procedures

- 4.1 Concerns and Complaints will be addressed fairly, quickly, constructively and impartially.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution of Concerns and Complaints: Resolution through discussion with a member of staff or their line manager.

Stage 2: Formal Complaints Procedure: Written complaint, investigation by an assigned Investigation Officer, and Stage 2 Outcome Letter provided.

Stage 3: Appeals Procedure: Appeal formally to the Deputy Principal who will assign an appropriate member of the College Leadership Team to conduct the appeal. A Stage 3 Appeal Outcome Letter will be provided. For Higher Education students, the

Stage 3 Appeal Outcome Letter will also serve as the Completion of Procedures Letter, as required by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE)

- 4.2 The College ensures confidentiality, no retaliation for complaints, and that complaints do not negatively impact the complainant.
- 4.3 A member of the College Leadership Team (CLT) will be appointed as an investigating officer. This person will implement the Concerns and Complaints Procedure within the specified timeframes.
- 4.4 All complaints will be treated equitably, respecting the College's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- 4.5 Higher Education students affiliated with other universities or organisations but studying at Newbury College or University Centre Newbury (UCN) can use their institution's complaints process if they remain unsatisfied after receiving the Stage 3 Appeal Outcome Letter.
- 4.6 Complaints about programmes or services are initially handled by the relevant area's manager, except when the complaint involves that manager.
- 4.7 The Deputy Principal is responsible for overseeing the Complaints Procedure and may delegate investigation duties to avoid conflicts of interest.
- 4.8 Where a complaint is against an individual member of staff, the investigation and decision making process will usually be overseen by someone more senior than them. In the case of the Principal, the Chair of Governors will nominate a member of the Board of Governors to act as the investigator.
- 4.9 Outcomes will be communicated to both the complainant and relevant staff.
- 4.10 The Curriculum and Quality Committee have oversight of this policy.

5. Compliance and Enforcement

Compliance with this policy will be monitored through regular reviews of the Register of Complaints to ensure alignment with current practices and regulations, identify outstanding complaints and ensure that the procedure follows the set time limits.

A record of each complaint will be held for 3 years for audit purposes.

6. References

- [The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education \(OIA\)](#)

7. Supporting Documents

- Student Recruitment, Admissions and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Whistle Blowing Policy (Public Interest Disclosure)

8. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant legislation.

Reviewed: June 2025

Next review date due: June 2028

Appendix A: Concerns and Complaints Procedure

How to submit a concern or a complaint

To submit a concern or a complaint at Newbury College or University Centre Newbury, the following steps should be followed:

Stage 1: Informal Resolution of Concerns and Complaints

The College expects that the majority of issues can be resolved at an early stage through informal discussions. If an issue arises, the initial step is to bring the concern to the attention of the relevant staff member or their line manager.

A response from the staff member or their line manager will be provided within 10 working days.

The College expects that the Stage 1 response will resolve the concern or complaint. If this is not the case, the complainant can move to Stage 2 of the procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Complaints Procedure

In the event that it has not been possible to resolve the concern or complaint informally in Stage 1, a formal complaint should be submitted via the College website within 5 working days of receiving the Stage 1 response:

- <https://newbury-college.ac.uk/contact-us>

The Deputy Principal will assign a Complaints Officer (a member of the College management team) to independently investigate and provide a formal written response to the complaint.

A Stage 2 Outcome Letter will be sent to the complainant within 15 working days of the College receiving the formal Stage 2 complaint.

In the event that the investigation will exceed the specified timeframe, the College will inform the complainant and keep them informed on progress.

The College expects that the formal outcome from Stage 2 will resolve the complaint. If this is not the case, the complainant can appeal against the outcome by moving to Stage 3 of the procedure.

Stage 3: Appeal Procedure

If the complainant wishes to appeal the Stage 2 outcome, a formal written appeal should be submitted via the College website within 5 working days of receiving the Stage 2 Outcome Letter:

- <https://newbury-college.ac.uk/contact-us>

The Deputy Principal will assign an appropriate member of the College Leadership Team to conduct the appeal, investigate and provide a formal written response.

A Stage 3 Appeal Outcome Letter will be sent to the complainant within 15 working days of the College receiving the written Stage 3 appeal. For Higher Education students, the Stage 3 Appeal Outcome Letter will also serve as the Completion of Procedures Letter, as required by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE).

In the event that the investigation will exceed the specified timeframe, the College will inform the complainant and keep them informed on progress.

This is the final stage of the College's complaints procedure.

External Resolution of Complaints

If a complainant reaches the final stage of the College's Concerns and Complaints Procedure and remains unsatisfied with the outcomes identified in the Stage 3 Appeal Outcome Letter, they have the right to appeal to the appropriate external body.

Details of the most applicable external body below will be provided in the Stage 3 Appeal Outcome Letter.

- **Learners on Further Education Programmes:** Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), currently merging with the Department for Education (DfE): <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>
- **Learners on Partner programmes:** The Stage 3 Appeal Outcome Letter will refer to the relevant partner complaints procedure.
- **Learners on Higher Education Programmes:** Appeal to the relevant partner University or Validating Body. If a complainant reaches the final stage of the partner University or Validating Body's procedures and remains unsatisfied, then they can seek adjudication from Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA must receive details of the complaint within 12 months of the provider's decision and production of the Completion of Procedures letter: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>