
Newton Abbot College

COLLEGE COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy should be used in conjunction with the Education (Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2010 Schedule 1, Part 7 and the guidance on the Education Funding Agency website.

1. General Principles of complaints

Introduction:

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Newton Abbot College is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the College's formal complaints procedure. For the College to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it will not be investigated.

The prime aim of Newton Abbot College's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the College. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated unless the Principal judges it to be in the students' best interest. Anonymous complaints against the Principal will be judged likewise by the Chair of Governors.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

2. The Newton Abbot College Policy has four main stages.

In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member.
- Stage 2 – Formal complaint is heard by the complaints co-ordinator or an appropriate member of staff.
- Stage 3 – Complaint is heard by Principal.
- Stage 4 – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

2.1 Stage 1 – Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with the College at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The College requests that parents make their first contact with their child's tutor. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to or call the College within 10 College working days and state what you would like the College to do. The College will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

2.2 Stage 2 – Complaint heard by the complaints co-ordinator or by an appropriate staff member.

Formal complaints shall be put in writing and addressed to the Principal. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The College will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 College working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the College has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 College working days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call the College within 10 College working days of getting our response. You will need to tell the College why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the College to do.

2.3 Stage 3 – Complaint heard by Principal

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, the Principal will arrange for a further investigation. Following the investigation, the Principal will normally give a written response within 10 College working days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you will need to let the College know within 10 College working days of getting the response.

2.4 Stage 4 – Complaint heard by the Governing Body’s Complaints Appeal Panel

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair or a nominated Governor will convene a complaints panel. The hearing will normally take place within 10 College working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 4 investigation.

The Complaints Appeal panel will include one member who is independent of the management and running of the College. Parents who are complainants may attend the Panel hearing and be accompanied by a friend if they wish; they will be given an opportunity to explain their complaint to the panel and explain what they would like the College to do about it.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the College and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel’s decision in writing within three College working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further.

* **N.B.** In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Principal, the Principal and Chair of Governors will be informed of the complaint. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Governing Body the member will be informed of the complaint.

3. What to do if you are not satisfied with the outcome of stage 4 (above)

The Governors appeal hearing is the last College-based stage of the complaints process.

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been handled properly, then you can contact the Education Funding Agency (EFA) through their ‘School Complaint form’ at <https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form>

Revised by Principal to comply with latest Government guidance regarding Appeal Panel membership:

July 15

Approved by Full Governing Body:

Oct 13