

Students Complaints Policy 2020-21

Lead Responsible:	Vice Principal
Approval Dates for Revisions:	
Academic Board/College Leaders	
Equality Impact Assessment	
Governor Committee: AC/FR/AU/SG/ES	
Governing Body	
Effective Date:	September 2020
Annual Review Date:	Summer 2021
Original Filename:	Z:\Executive Support\VP\Policies\Student Complaints Procedure\2020-21\Students Complaint Policy 2020-21.docx

Document Information

1. This document applies to all students enrolled with Capel Manor College from 1 September 2020.
2. It applies to all modes of study for further education courses and to all College centres and all activities as organised by the College.
3. It supersedes all previous versions and copies of the Student Complaints Policy.
4. It may also be used as a guide for complaints for prospective or immediate past students of the College.

Purpose

5. The College recognises that on occasion, students may have legitimate complaints about their course, their study, the College facilities, other students or our staff and this document aims to allow easy communication and satisfactory resolution of those complaints.
6. It is our aim to deliver the best service and experience of the College as possible in every area therefore we welcome authentic attempts to correct mistakes or improve our service.
7. Our intention is that complaints, whenever they arise, are resolved as speedily as possible and this is helped if complaints are made as simply and as clearly as possible, as soon as any dissatisfaction arises and to the most appropriate person to be able to resolve the issue. We hope that most of the time these are settled informally and amicably but we set out a more formal procedure for when immediate resolution is not possible.
8. We recognise that every student should feel free to raise a concern without prejudice or recrimination and we aim to take every complaint seriously and deal with them in confidence as swiftly as possible.
9. It is not possible to predict the specific outcomes of complaints but where complaints are found to be relevant and justified, possible outcomes might include an apology, a change (or a commitment to change) to processes or facilities, appropriate and commensurate reparation or reimbursement or a combination of these outcomes.
10. In short, this document aims to:
 - Describe what you should do if you have a complaint
 - Indicate what is covered by this procedure and what is not
 - Suggest alternative courses of action or sources of advice
 - Improve the quality and standards of the College provision

Scope

11. This procedure covers, and is limited to all students at all centres, enrolled on courses at Capel Manor College from the date of this procedure undertaking work-based or College-based study.
12. The Student Complaints Procedure neither overrides nor alters other College policies and/or procedures for example, if a student is involved in a disciplinary action then that procedure will be undertaken without influence or prejudice from this procedure and the Student Complaints Procedure cannot be used as an alternative means of appeal against decisions made under other procedures.

Complaints Procedure

Overall Summary

13. All complaints will be regarded as confidential but cannot be anonymous.
14. **The principle approach of the College is to deal with issues as soon as possible and as close to the source as possible.**
15. There are two stages to this Student Complaint Procedure: Informal Stage and Formal Stage.
16. Wherever possible, it is the intention that complaints are dealt by the informal stage and only escalated to the formal stage when a mutually satisfactory resolution cannot be found within a reasonable period of time.

The overall process is summarised in the flowchart (see overleaf).

Informal Stage

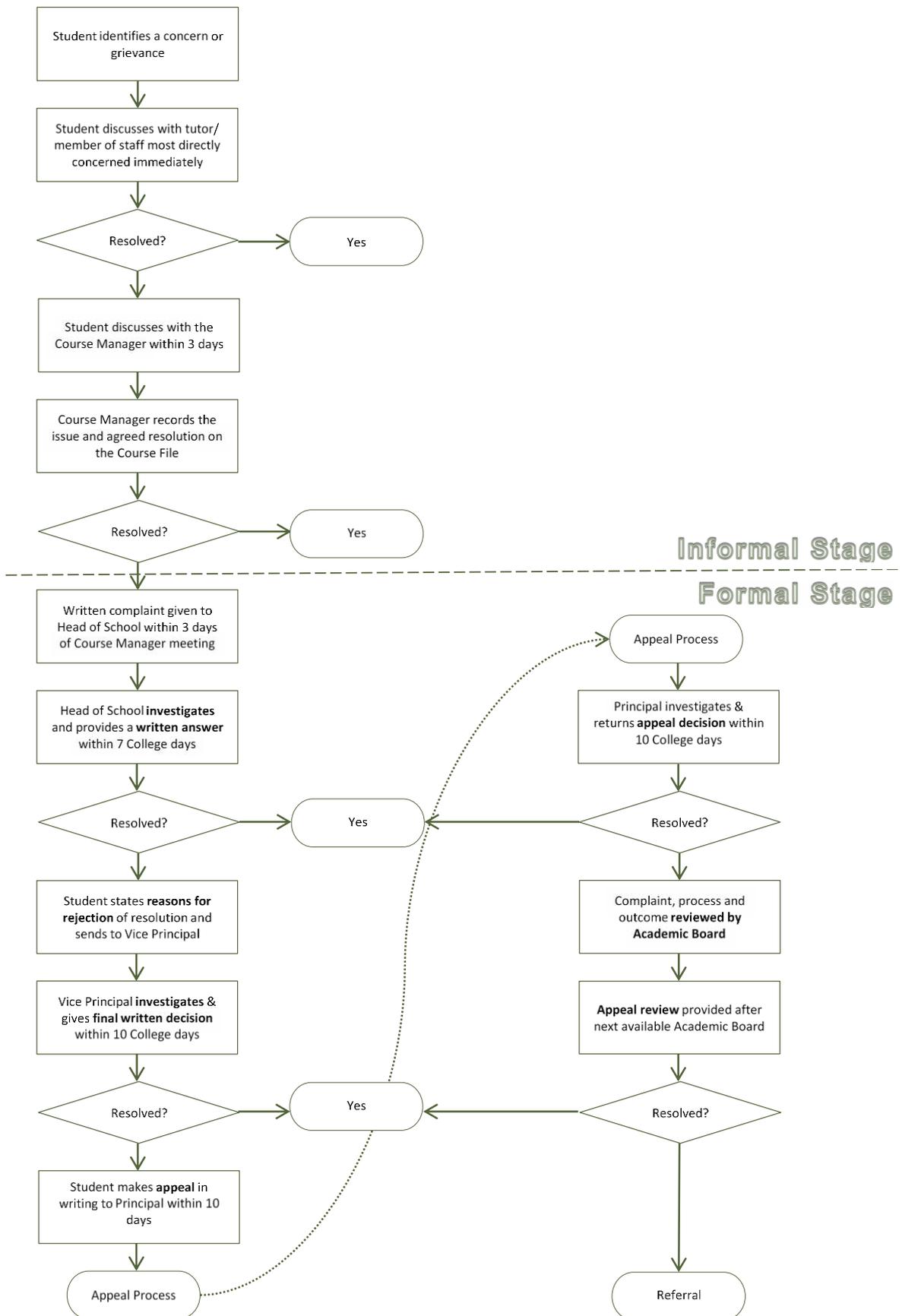
17. The informal stage aims to encourage an amicable and quick resolution without unduly formal proceedings. The student should raise the problem with the member of College staff most directly concerned or connected with the problem or grievance and the student and member of staff should discuss the problem and seek to agree a resolution.
18. If the complaint is about an individual and if you feel able, begin by complaining directly to the person against whom you have a grievance.
19. If this does not lead to a satisfactory outcome, or if you feel unable to confront the person directly, you should discuss your complaint against an individual or your concerns about your course/College facilities with your Course Manager.
20. Your Course Manager should make a note of your complaint for the Course File and should seek a resolution with you which you are both satisfied with.
21. Should your complaint be about, or significantly involve the Course Manager, then the Head of School will appoint a suitable person to respond to you which will normally be a Deputy Head or Team Leader within the School.
22. If after this informal discussion you are not satisfied with the response from your Course Manager, you may wish to proceed to the formal stage and it is essential that you write down the complaint, as simply, clearly and concisely as possible identifying yourself, the nature of your complaint giving details of names, places and dates/times etc. The more clearly you set out your complaint, the more easily we are able to address it.
23. This will trigger the formal stage of this Student Complaints Policy and your full written complaint must be delivered to your Head of School within 3 days of the meeting with your Course Manager.

Formal Stage

24. The formal stage applies only when the informal stage has not been able to reasonably and amicably solve the initial complaint and comprises three sub-stages: formal complaint, appeal and review.
25. **It is essential that you write down the complaint, as simply, clearly and concisely as possible identifying yourself, the nature of your complaint giving details of names, places and dates/times etc. The more clearly you set out your complaint, the more easily we are able to address it.**
26. Each sub-stage must be followed in order and each sub-stage concluded before the next begins.
27. Normally the complaint procedure when followed through all stages will be concluded within 20 College days (i.e. normal working days for the College not including bank holidays, inset days, etc.)

28. Normally the appeals procedure when followed through all stages will be concluded within 10 College days.
29. The duration of the review procedure is dependent on the dates of the next available Academic Board Meeting.
30. It is essential your written complaint is received by the Head of School as soon as possible and that it is written simply, clearly and concisely.
31. Should your complaint be about, or significantly involve the Head of School then the College will appoint a suitable person to respond to you which will normally be a Deputy Head or Team Leader within the School.
32. The College recognises that under certain circumstances it may not be possible or appropriate for a student to complain immediately and where this is the case, and acceptable reasons are given, the College will seek to ensure that the student will not be disadvantaged although only complaints within a reasonable period of time will be considered.
33. The Head of School will review your complaint and investigate the circumstances which may require interviews with yourself or others involved.
34. The Head of School will normally provide a written answer to you within 7 College days.
35. If you are not satisfied with the written response from the Head of School then you should simply, clearly and succinctly set out the reasons why you are not satisfied to the Vice Principal within 3 days.
36. The Vice Principal will investigate your complaint, its circumstances and the responses of the College and provide you with a final written decision within 10 College days.
37. The Vice Principal's final written decision may support the initial responses you have received or offer an alternative conclusion or resolution.
38. If you are not satisfied with the final written decision from the Vice Principal then you can appeal to the Principal which you must do in writing within 10 days of the date of the Vice Principal's final written decision, clearly stating why you wish to appeal the decision.
39. The Principal will review the processes of your complaint and provide a written response to you within 10 College days which will decide whether the process has been properly undertaken or otherwise in which case an alternative conclusion or resolution may be offered.
40. If you are not satisfied with the written response from the Principal then you should simply, clearly and succinctly set out the reasons why you are not satisfied and address this to the Vice Principal within 10 days.
41. The Vice Principal will then forward your complaint, its circumstances and the responses of the College for review by the Academic Board which comprises of representatives of College management and gathers 3 times a year.
42. Responses to your complaint and/or the College processes will be reviewed by Academic Board and recorded in the minutes which are subsequently made available to Governors for review at committee meetings.
43. A copy of the relevant responses from Academic Board will be made available to you within 10 College days of the date of the Academic Board meeting.

Summary of Complaints Procedure



Additional Information

Further Referral

44. Should the complaint be about a College Governor, the Clerk to Governors will be advised and the complaint will be dealt with by a Special Committee of the Governing Body in lieu of Academic Board.
45. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, appeal and review by Academic Board there is an option to refer the complaint the relevant funding agency.
46. In considering your application, the funding agencies may refer the complaint back to the College or undertake an enquiry to consider whether the College has reasonably followed its own procedures.

Notes

47. Records of correspondence, supporting evidence, witness statements and resolutions should be kept at each stage of the process as appropriate by the Course Manager, Head of School, Vice Principal and Principal.
48. Complaints held on Course Files will be reviewed mid-course and end of course by the Course Team to ensure that appropriate adjustments are made to the course, teaching and learning and facilities etc. whenever and wherever appropriate.
49. Redacted summaries of complaints received under the formal stage of this procedure may be required by the Academic Board or other appropriate Committees as part of the College's processes for monitoring quality assurance and improvement processes.
50. If the student is required to meet the Head of School or Vice Principal then the student may be accompanied at any such meeting by another including a family member, another student of the College and a Course Representative.
51. If it is not possible to meet the timescales set out in this procedure due to unforeseen circumstances then either party should make that clear as soon as possible to the other party with a clear explanation of the reasons and indicating the likely timescale of response.
52. If a member of staff or another student is the subject of a complaint, the Head of School/Vice Principal shall ensure that s/he is given appropriate opportunities for representation during the investigation and is informed of its outcome.