



# Compliments & Complaints Policy

## 1 Introduction

This policy identifies the arrangements to be used by Hopwood Hall College to deal with anyone who has had a positive or negative experience with the College services. This includes compliments, comments, feedback and complaints from students, parents, customers, employers, contractors, local residents, visitors and any other users of our services.

## 2 Scope

This policy and procedure will enable customers to provide the college with compliments, comments, feedback and complaints. It will help to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination against any individual on grounds of sex, race, ethnicity or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, trade union membership, disability, socio-economic status, offering background or any other personal characteristic. Any reasonable adjustment or support required to enable compliments and complains to be made will be put in place.

This policy does not replace the College's Disciplinary Procedure, Whistle Blowing Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Single Equality Scheme, Allegation Management Procedure or Fees Policy and these policies / procedures should be followed where appropriate.

## 3 Policy Statement

The College is committed to providing high quality experience for all its customers through teaching, learning and a range of professional support and commercial services. The College welcomes compliments, comments, feedback and complaints and will deal with them in a sensitive, fair and efficient way. The Policy will be published on the College's website, communicated to all staff via Netconsent and updated accordingly.

## 4 Purpose

The compliments, comments, feedback and complaints procedure plays an important part in enabling the college to gain awareness of positive aspects of our services and areas that require further development. This policy is in place to:

- Help customers understand the compliments, comments, feedback and complaints procedure
- Enable customers to compliment, comment, feedback and complain
- Address all complaints effectively
- Allow speedy handling with established time limits for action
- Keep people informed of the progress of their complaint
- Ensure a full and fair investigation where required
- Respect customers confidentiality
- Collate information to assist the College to improve services.

## 5 Definitions

The College defines Compliments, Comments, Feedback and Complaints in the following way:

**Compliment:** 'A polite expression of praise or admiration'.

**Comment:** 'A verbal or written remark expressing an opinion or reaction'.

**Feedback:** 'Information about reactions to a product or a person's performance of a task, which is used as a basis for development or praise'.

**Complaint:** 'An expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of services provided which requires a response'.

**Working Day:** this is a college working day and applies to term time only.

## 6 Roles and Responsibilities

**All staff**

- All staff have responsibility for ensuring that customers are sign posted to the Student and College Services Team (SCST) who will receive and record both **informal and formal** compliments, comments, feedback and complaints.
- All staff must refer Compliments, Comments, Feedback and Complaints to the Student and College Services team so that they can be logged and tracked.

### **SCS team**

- Student and College Services staff are responsible for initial clarification and recording of Complaints on the college Compliment and Complaint system.
- Student and College Services staff will provide customers who have made a formal complaint with an acknowledgment letter which is generate by the system automatically once a complaint is recorded.
- Respond to any reasonable adjustment or support.

### **SCS Manager**

- The Student and College Services Manager will ensure that this policy is updated and accessible.
- The Student and College Services Manager will be responsible for the allocation of Complaints for investigation to the appropriate Manager
- The Student and College Services Manager will make the manager of the reviewer aware of investigation.
- The Student and College Services Manager is responsible for monitoring the compliment and complaints process and for preparing termly reports and an annual report on the operation of the procedure.
- Respond to any reasonable adjustment or support.

### **Investigating Manager**

- The Investigating Manager is responsible for undertaking the timely investigation into a Complaint allocated to them and reaching an outcome or resolving the Complaint and compiling the resolution letter. The Investigating Manager is also responsible for recommendations for future preventive measures.
- Respond to any reasonable adjustment or support.

### **Marketing and Admissions Manager**

- The Marketing and Admissions Manager is responsible for auditing and tracking any comments made on social media and for directing individuals to the policy should the nature of their comment be a complaint.

### **Customer**

- Customers are required to bring their Compliments, Comments, Feedback and Complaints to the college's attention as soon as possible. This can be done in various ways including face to face, writing a letter, by telephone and via the college Website.
- Representative are only permitted when the student's consent is confirmed.

## **7 Procedure**

### **a. Informal compliments, comments, feedback and complaints**

- Informal Compliments, Comments, Feedback and Complaints may be received by any member of staff.
- Staff members should listen and respond to any concerns or negative feedback in a sensitive, fair and efficient way
- Informal Compliments and Complaints should be referred to the SCST to be recorded on the college Compliment and Complaint system (This means that if an employee has received a Compliment, Comments or Complaint and have resolved the case, they should send the information only to SCST for recording purposes).
- No formal responses are necessarily required for Compliments, Comments, Feedback and informal Complaints.
- Where appropriate Staff should make recommendations for improvement within their own area when they have resolved an informal complaint.

#### **b. Formal compliments, comments, feedback and complaints**

- All formal Compliments and Complaints should be referred to the SCST to be recorded on the college Complaint system
- SCST will respond to any formal complaints with an acknowledgement letter. The customer will receive this within 2 working days. (Face to face complaints may receive an acknowledgement letter immediately).
- The Student and College Services Manager will allocate an investigator within 2 working days
- The investigator may liaise with the complainant to seek further clarification
- The investigator will investigate the complaint and aim to find a resolution within 12 working days
- The investigator will provide the complainant with an outcome letter within 12 working days
- The Student and College Services Manager will record the outcome on the college Compliment and Complaint system
- Where further investigation is required and more time is needed, this will be communicated to SCST and the complainant.
- Where appropriate the investigator will make recommendations for improvements using the recommendations for improvements form.
- If there are any HR implications, these will be sent to the HR Manager for escalation.

#### **c. Appeals**

- If a customer is dissatisfied with the outcome offered by the investigator, the complainant may appeal and request a review of the outcome.
- The Student and College Services Manager will record the appeal and allocate a Reviewer within 2 working days.
- The Reviewer will be a member of the Senior Management Team
- The Reviewer will review the complaint and aim to find a resolution
- The Reviewer will provide the complainant with a final outcome letter within 12 working days of the date appeal being made.
- The Student and College Services Manager will record the outcome on the college Compliment and Complaint system

#### **d. Unresolved**

- If the complainant has exhausted all avenues within the college policy and remains unsatisfied with the resolution provided by the College, then they should seek advice from the Government funding agencies (ESFA). In the case of a complaint relating to the college's Higher Education provision, advice should be sought from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for which the College is a member of the scheme.

#### **e. Feedback & Comments**

- The college will also offer a wide range of opportunities for its customers to provide feedback and comments including during Enrolment and Open Days, Learner Voice mechanisms, Principal's Question Time, Tutorials / Progress Reviews, email, Its Learning and via Social Media.

#### **f. Monitoring & Evaluation**

- The Student and College Services Manager will track the progress of all complaints and will submit an annual report to the wider management team summarising the complaints and

#### **g. Document Review Information:**

- Policy Owner: Ross Black
- Policy Date: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) completed: Yes
- EIA completed By: Nimisha Mistry/Ross Black 05/02/2018
- Policy Review Date: 13<sup>th</sup> **December 2020**

#### **h. Who will need to know about this policy**

- All employees (via Netconsent)
- All students ( via Its Learning & Tutorial)
- All customers and visitors (via college website and Student & College Services)

**i. Related Policies**

- Disciplinary Policy for Students
- Single Equality Scheme
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Whistleblowing Procedure

**Appendix A**

**Compliments & Complaints Flowchart**

