

# St Elizabeth's College

## Compliments, Grumbles, Worries, Complaints and Appeals Policy

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## **Introduction**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that St Elizabeth's College provides consistent attention to worries and complaints of the young person (or member of staff on his/her behalf), parents/carers, local authorities and other individuals/organisations with an interest in St Elizabeth's College.

It is important to understand the difference between a complaint and a worry to ensure that the correct procedures are followed.

At first it may be unclear as to whether the individual is raising a question or expressing an opinion, rather than making a complaint. An initial discussion with either the Head of College or Registered Manager may help to clarify and decide the next steps. Complaints specific to Supported Living should be directed to the Registered Manager.

Please note that any complaints relating to safeguarding concerns of children and/or young people, will be managed via the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

Staff grievances, Whistleblowing/Speaking Out, Disciplinary procedures and Capability / Performance Management fall outside of this policy.

We cannot deal with complaints that have or are being/or likely to be dealt with by legal proceedings, contractual processes or third parties. Where possible/necessary, we will refer you to an appropriate alternative organisation to deal with your complaint.

Once a complaint has been made it can be withdrawn at any time by the complainant.

### **1.0 Compliments and Complaints**

St Elizabeth's works with hundreds of individuals and organisations each week. We seek to provide the best possible level of services. The feedback we receive from learners, parents and guardians shows a high level of satisfaction with the way we work and the services we provide. However, sometimes we do not always handle matters as well as we should and we are always looking at ways to improve upon what we do.

We positively welcome suggestions for improvement and changes so we can stay at the forefront of service provision. If you have a compliment about our service, please let us know (contact details are at the end of this document). It is important to know when things are going well so that we can reinforce and build upon such work. It is also important for us to know when things have not gone so well. St Elizabeth's College will encourage parents, carers and learners to make compliments, observations and raise worries or complaints so that we can find out how to put things right and continue to improve.

### **2.0 What is a Complaint?**

We see a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by us or our staff or partners where our initial response to the problem has not proven satisfactory. Many issues can result from a simple misunderstanding and once explained or clarified need not develop into a complaint.

Complaints are a constructive and valuable source of information and enable areas for improvement and change to be identified, so we can stay at the forefront of service provision.

We do not consider a query or a request for a service, or a problem arising between service users, as a complaint unless you then have reason to complain about the way we are dealing with the situation.

We cannot respond to anonymous complaints but we can use all your comments and feedback to help influence and improve our services.

We will provide a User Friendly version of the procedure for St. Elizabeth's College learners, when requested.

### **3.0 Grumbles**

Learners may feel unhappy about something, a matter that may be small but important to them. Grumble forms are available in an 'easy-read' format and provide another form of feedback that we take seriously. Learners raise a grumble verbally or in writing, and we endeavour to respond within 24 hours, so as to address the matter as soon as possible.

A copy of the grumble form can be found in Appendix A, below.

### **4.0 How do I Complain?**

This policy applies to any matter (other than matters relating to admissions and exclusions which have their own processes) which has been raised with the College as a matter of concern but which has not been capable of resolution informally and which the complainant or the College consider should be dealt with on a formal basis.

It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way. The Chair of Governors and Health and Care Committee shall have discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

Comments and complaints may be received verbally or in writing. Complaints must be made to us within three months of the difficulty arising or event occurring. Contact details for addressing your complaint to St Elizabeth's College are provided at the end of this document.

#### **4.1 Stage One – Initial Complaint – Parents and Carers**

In the first instance it is important to try to reconcile the issue with the member of staff you are dealing with. Make it clear you are unhappy with their response and we will treat the matter as a complaint. A complaint at this stage may be made over the phone or face to face but is best put in writing. We will record and acknowledge your complaint within five working days and confirm who is dealing with it. Where the grounds of complaint concern the conduct of that Manager then we will ask a different Manager to investigate.

- If relating to Education, contact the Head of College.
- If relating to Supported Living, contact the Registered Manager.
- If relating to Nursing or Therapy contact the Director of Health and Care.
- Miscellaneous general concerns can be raised with any of the above, if the usual route would cause undue delay (e.g. staff shifts / annual leave, etc.)

If at any stage in the process your complaint is about the person you are dealing with, then you should raise the matter at the next stage instead.

We will respond in writing within three weeks of receiving your complaint. At any stage in the process, we may seek to convene a resolution meeting to deal with the matter informally, where appropriate. If we have not completed our investigation within three weeks, we will write at least every four weeks thereafter to keep you informed of progress.

When acknowledging your complaint, we will inform you of the contact details of the relevant Social Worker, Care or Education Manager at the appropriate placing local authority, should you request them. We will record your complaint and respond in writing within three weeks. If we have not completed our investigation within three weeks, we will write at least every four weeks thereafter to keep you informed of progress.

If the matter is not dealt with in a timely manner nor to your satisfaction, then you should let the person involved know that you wish to take the complaint to Stage Two.

We would inform Ofsted of any serious complaint in addition to any other notification requirements which may be placed on the College or Supported Living setting. This would be the placing local authority, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the local Safeguarding Team.

#### **4.2 Stage Two – if you are still unhappy**

If you remain dissatisfied with our response under Stage One, then your complaint will be referred to either the Director of Education or Director of Health and Care (if the complaint is in relation to the management of health/care within the education setting), as appropriate.

You must complain within one month of receiving the Stage One response. At this stage your complaint should be in writing giving reasons for your continuing dissatisfaction. We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days of its receipt.

We will record your issues as a Stage Two complaint and try to respond within three weeks or keep you informed of progress at regular four weekly intervals if the investigations take longer.

#### **4.3 Stage Three**

An appeal against a Stage Two decision may be made in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, to the Chief Executive at St Elizabeth's Centre who will investigate and respond using the same timetables as apply to Stage Two.

#### **4.4 Stage Four - Appeal to College Governors/Trustees**

Where a complainant remains unhappy with the outcome of stage three you can appeal to the Governors/Health and Care Committee within one month of receipt the Chief Executive's decision. You should give the reasons for your appeal in writing and address your letter to the Chief Executive who will arrange for the Chairs of the committee's to conduct a review of the case within a reasonable period of time. We will let you know the outcome of their review within ten days of their considering your appeal.

#### **4.5 Stage Five**

If you have exhausted the Centre's complaints procedure up to and including Stage Four and you remain unhappy with the decision, then Ofsted and CQC will also look at formal complaints if you are unhappy with our response. Their contact details are contained in Section 7 of this Policy. This option is open to you at any stage of our procedure. We will always copy any serious complaints, together with our response to Ofsted in addition to complying with any other notification requirements placed on the College. They will often want to know that our own procedures up to and including Stage Four, have been exhausted before conducting their own enquiries. Within the Domiciliary Care Agency (Supported Living) the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will also look at formal complaints if you are unhappy with our response.

## 5.0 Unreasonable Behaviour or Demands

In the case of unacceptable behaviour towards staff or a complainant putting unreasonable demands on the College to the disadvantage of others; or persistence in repeatedly raising the same issue, taking up a disproportionate amount of time and resources, the Chief Executive of St Elizabeth's Centre may decide to restrict complainant contact with the College/Supported Living or with staff.

Individual complainants will be notified in writing, with reasons, of any such temporary or permanent restrictions.

All complainants will be treated with respect and consideration. Relationships will not be damaged in any way as a result of the complaint being lodged.

Once a complaint investigation has been concluded, St Elizabeth's will identify any actions or recommendations required to ensure that we learn from complaints raised. This enables the continuation and development of services in order to provide the highest standards of service to learners, their family, carers and guardians.

## 6.0 Service User Views

To assist College learners in raising worries or complaints we have both a Service user friendly version and a pictorial version of how to raise worries or complaints and may facilitate the involvement of an independent external advocate where appropriate. We will also enable young people to access the complaints procedure of the placing Local Authority if they so wish. If a young person makes a complaint and is not satisfied with the response a four stage process consistent with this policy will be followed by the Centre.

## 7.0 Contact Details

### 7.1 Complaints to College (academic / curriculum matters)

Director of Education

St Elizabeth's College, Perry Green, Hertfordshire SG10 6EW

Tel: 01279 844419 or email: [Teresa.glynn@stelizabeths.org.uk](mailto:Teresa.glynn@stelizabeths.org.uk)

### Complaints to College (Domiciliary Care / Supported living matters)

Registered Manager

St Elizabeth's College, Perry Green, Hertfordshire SG10 6EW

Tel: 01279 844419 or email: [Jenny.Brand@stelizabeths.org.uk](mailto:Jenny.Brand@stelizabeths.org.uk)

Director of Health and Care

St Elizabeth's College, Perry Green, Hertfordshire SG10 6EW

Tel: 01279 844419 or email: [Cheryl.Allum-Clarke@stelizabeths.org.uk](mailto:Cheryl.Allum-Clarke@stelizabeths.org.uk)

### Complaints to Ofsted

Enquiries

National Business Unit

Ofsted

5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Floors

Piccadilly Gate

### Whistle-blowing?

Tel: Ofsted Hotline at 0300 123 3155

or email: [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)

Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 1234 234

or email: [enquires@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquires@ofsted.gov.uk)

<http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaints>

Complaints to CQC

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/contact-us/how-complain/complain-about-service-or-provider>

Tel: 03000 616161

Appendix A



**LEARNER GRUMBLE**

A large, rounded rectangular speech bubble with a tail pointing downwards and to the left. The interior of the bubble is divided into ten horizontal lines, providing space for the learner to write their grumble.

Someone will talk to you about your grumble within 24 hours.

Name .....

Date .....



## Response to Learner Grumble

Staff Member .....

Date .....

### Discussion with Learner – (key points)

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- 
- 
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- 

### Action Taken

### Outcome

Date Grumble Closed .....