



Quality policies and procedures

Compliments, concerns and complaints policy

Aim: The aim is to ensure that compliments are recorded and celebrated and that concerns and complaints are addressed quickly and effectively.

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Policy Author	Deputy Principal

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1. Introduction

This policy ensures that compliments are recorded and celebrated. It also ensures that concerns are dealt with very swiftly (within 2 working days) and that complaints are dealt with quickly yet thoroughly (within 10 working days). It also ensures that concerns and complaints are addressed effectively within a given set of procedures. These procedures are made available on the college's website so that people know how to register a compliment, raise a concern or make a complaint.

2. Scope of the policy

This policy is applicable to all members of the college community and to members of the public. Any person, including members of the general public, may register a compliment, raise a concern or make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services.

3. Policy statement

- 3.1 Blackpool Sixth's core values and equality and diversity policy set out the standards and services our customers (students, parents and guardians, staff, members of the public) can expect the college to provide. These are available on the college's website.
- 3.2 Anyone not satisfied with the level of service should feel able to approach relevant staff to address their concern promptly and directly. They should be confident that they can report the matter openly and be sure that the college will deal with the dissatisfaction courteously, sympathetically, fairly and objectively. A concern or complaint can be made in person, by telephone or in writing.
- 3.3 A mature and self-critical organisation will actively seek suggestions in order to improve its services. Making such customer feedback successful and straightforward is also important. For this reason, the college undertakes a range of student and parent satisfaction surveys, regularly liaises with neighbours and key partners and has established an appropriate range of forums to enable students and staff to express their views within a framework where action is anticipated.
- 3.4 Information about complaints and concerns will be used to prevent recurrence and raise the standard of college services. The college's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and its Governing Body will regularly monitor complaints and concerns and act wherever necessary to address the issues raised.
- 3.5 This compliments, concerns and complaints policy and procedure provides the framework within which anyone who has experienced dissatisfaction with college services can raise their concerns and the framework within which the staff should deal with complaints and concerns from students, parents, customers, employers, contractors, local residents, visitors and others. It does not replace college procedures for appeals about student admissions or exclusions, matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation or statutory assessments of special educational needs and disabilities, staff grievances and disciplinary action, whistleblowing, college reorganisation proposals or complaints about services provided by other providers who may use college premises or facilities; those procedures should be used where appropriate.

- 3.6 In addition, this policy and procedure recognises the importance of giving validation and praise to individuals when compliments are received from customers and partners.
- 3.7 Concerns or complaints should be raised in the first instance with the person or area concerned as soon as possible and not later than within five working days of the incident. This will be a student's teacher or other member of staff. Exceptions will be considered where there was an unavoidable delay in raising a concern or making a complaint. The member of staff dealing with a concern or complaint will make every reasonable effort to resolve the complaint promptly at local level and will ask the complainant at the earliest stage what they think might resolve the issue. At this level, college staff will seek to resolve a concern within 2 working days or a complaint within ten working days. If there is an unavoidable delay in resolving a concern or a complaint, the complainant will be provided with a new deadline and will be given an explanation of the delay.
- 3.8 Compliments will be received verbally or in writing and will be received directly by the individual in receipt of the praise or by a direct line manager. College staff will seek to share compliments in a genuine and generous manner.

4. Procedures for concerns

- 4.1 Many issues and concerns are quickly and satisfactorily resolved by speaking with the person or area concerned directly. This will be a student's teacher or other member of staff. A "concern" may be defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought".
- 4.2 Concerns will be recorded on the college's central record. All concerns will be recorded on the "CCC record form" (see appendix) and emailed to the PA to the Deputy Principal within 1 working day of receiving the complaint. The information required includes:
- i. Date concern raised
 - ii. Area of (department) and reason for concern
 - iii. Persons involved (including staff who responded)
 - iv. Date and timescale of resolution
- 4.3 The member of staff must copy the email to the Head of Department.
- 4.4 Concerns do not require a full investigation because these issues can be resolved quickly either by clarification with the person or immediate action.
- 4.5 The college will endeavour, wherever possible, to resolve concerns within 2 working days.

5. Procedures for complaints

A "complaint" may be generally defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action".

5.1 Stage one – informal

- 5.1.1 Verbal complaints made to reception and staff in public areas will be referred to the

appropriate manager of the area, which is the subject of complaint. All complaints will be recorded on the “CCC record form” (see appendix) and emailed to the PA to the Deputy Principal within 1 working day of receiving the complaint. If a complaint is about a member of staff it will be referred to their Head of Department or other line manager.

- 5.1.2 If resolved, the manager will send an updated record of the complaint on the “CCC record form” to the PA to the Deputy Principal within 2 working days of completion, including the following information:
 - i. Date complaint raised
 - ii. Area of (department) and reason for concern
 - iii. Persons involved (including manager who responded and name/relationship of complainant)
 - iv. Actions taken (brief bullet points) and a copy of the original complaint
 - v. Date and timescale of resolution
 - vi. If the complaint was a] dismissed as unfounded, b] resolved c] upheld (or partially upheld)
- 5.1.3 If a manager is unable to resolve the issue within 5 working days, the complaint moves to Stage Two.
- 5.1.4 A record of the complaint and action taken will be sent to the PA to the Deputy Principal.
- 5.1.5 If there are reasons why anyone does not wish to resolve the matter informally they should follow the formal complaints procedure. The complainant will at this point be directed to the Deputy Principal.

5.2 Stage two – formal

- 5.2.1 If the complainant does not feel the issue has been satisfactorily resolved, they have the opportunity to make a formal complaint, usually in writing, to the Deputy Principal. Other college managers may become involved in resolving the complaint if necessary and as designated by the Deputy Principal. If appropriate, a meeting will be offered between the complainant and other parties involved to arrive at an agreed resolution.
- 5.2.2 The complainant(s) will need to provide details of their complaint (unless already supplied to another member of the college staff), usually in writing, and within five working days of the event (or the end of stage 1). The details required are:
 - a. The nature of the complaint and persons involved
 - b. The date on which the incident occurred
 - c. Contact address and telephone number
 - d. Whether anyone else was affected or witnessed the event
- 5.2.3 If an anonymous complaint is received, this will be investigated in the normal way, and the outcome kept on file.
- 5.2.4 Complainants will be advised that while confidentiality will be respected as far as possible, it is usually not possible to resolve complaints without disclosing the complainant’s identity to relevant parties in order for the issue to be resolved fairly. However, wherever possible and if requested, the college will not disclose the complainant’s identity in the course of the investigation. Students can be assured

that nothing will appear in their academic records to indicate that they have made a complaint.

- 5.2.5 The college will respond within two working days to indicate that an investigation is being undertaken and aim to conclude an investigation and respond within ten working days of receiving a complaint.
- 5.2.6 The Deputy Principal will investigate details of the complaint and decide to:
- Dismiss the complaint as unfounded, giving reasons.
 - Propose an amicable resolution.
 - Uphold or partially uphold the complaint, offer an apology, take appropriate steps to address the issue and to avoid a similar problem arising in future.

6. Appeals

- 6.1 If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response to their complaint, they may appeal in writing to the Principal. The appeal must be made within 5 working days of receipt of the outcome of the complaint. The Principal will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days. The Principal will decide to:
- Dismiss the complaint as unfounded.
 - Refer the complaint back to an area and propose an amicable settlement.
 - Uphold or partially uphold the complaint, offer an apology, recommend appropriate steps are taken to address the issue and to avoid a similar problem arising in future.
- 6.2 The decision of the Principal is final and the complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome within ten working days.

7. Taking a complaint further

- 7.1 If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the college's response following appeal s/he should seek advice from the Deputy Principal on how to take their complaint further.
- 7.2 Only after all college procedures for dealing with complaints have been exhausted should a complaint be referred to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). This does not apply where a complaint is the subject of legal proceedings or relates to the quality of service provided by external bodies such as an examination board.
- 7.3 **How to contact the ESFA**
Initial complaints about institutions funded by the ESFA can be made on the 'Contact Us' form on the ESFA's website (<https://www.gov.uk/complainfurthereducationapprenticeship>) or they can also be made in writing to:

ESFA complaints team complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk
Complaints team
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

8. Complaints against the Principal or members of the Governing Body

- 8.1 Complaints against the Principal should be addressed to the Chair of Directors c/o the Clerk to the Corporation. Complaints against the Governing Body should also be addressed to the Clerk to the Corporation.
- 8.2 For any instances where it is felt that the complaints procedure does not set down a precise course of action, reference should be made back to the underlying principles of natural justice and equity: when in doubt the basic principles of appeal and fair hearing should apply.

9. Procedures for compliments

- 9.1 On receipt of a formal compliment, a member of staff will forward a copy of it or brief bullet points from a verbal compliment to the PA to the Deputy Principal.
- 9.2 A member of the senior team may send a copy of the letter or email received with an acknowledgement on behalf of SLT, where appropriate.

10. Records and monitoring

- 10.1 The PA to the Deputy Principal will maintain a central, confidential record of compliments, concerns and complaints, actions taken and outcomes. These records will inform the quality assurance processes. These will be recorded electronically. A written analysis of compliments, concerns and complaints will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team at the mid year and end of year points. Members of the Leadership Team will ensure compliments, concerns and complaints within their areas are addressed and that they form part of the quality assurance process.
- 10.2 An annual report will be presented to the Board of Directors. Analysis of complaints will be according to the following categories:
 - 1 Teaching and learning
 - 2 Student support
 - 3 Examination assessment
 - 4 Admissions and guidance
 - 5 Student behaviour
 - 6 Accommodation and resources
 - 7 Staffing
 - 8 Support services and administration
 - 9 Equality and diversity
 - 10 [Transport](#)
 - 11 Events and performances
 - 12 Charity
 - 13 Other (to include exceptional or one off complaints)
- 10.3 Teaching areas will be identified in the report by curriculum area only. The college will preserve individual anonymity in monitoring documents.
- 10.4 The report will include a section on compliments received.

This compliments, concerns and complaints policy and procedure will be published on the college's website (<https://blackpoolsixth.ac.uk/policies/>) and directly to students via the tutorial programme (Life Links).

If you require this information in another format or if you need guidance on understanding the procedure, please contact our Marketing Officer on 01253 394911 or enquiries@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk for further details.

11. Review

The content and operation of this policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Deputy Principal.

12. Other related policies

Equality and diversity policy

Whistleblowing policy

Positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures (students)

SEND policy

Staff disciplinary procedure

Grievance policy (staff)

Redundancy procedure (staff)

Impact Assessment Status: Complete
