

SWANMORE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Complaints Policy

Principles

Every complaint is a matter of concern to the college and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness. Whenever a complaint is upheld every effort will be made to rectify the issue and, if necessary, action will be taken to try to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem. The college will not investigate anonymous complaints or allegations but confidentiality will be respected and the identity of informants will be protected whenever necessary.

The approach of the college will be to focus on resolution and service review rather than blame. Our investigative process will aim to be fair and transparent for staff as well as complainants.

The college will not tolerate vexatious, abusive or malicious complaints.

Timescales

Complaints to the college will normally be acknowledged within two working days of receipt and a response will usually be provided within five working days. When a matter requires further investigation than is possible within the normal timescale, the complainant will be informed and an indication given of when a final response can be expected.

The preliminary stage – an informal approach

Parents will frequently raise legitimate concerns about their children's education. Most parents do not regard such inquiries as 'complaints' but nevertheless, their concerns will be addressed with similar urgency and thoroughness. Therefore parents are encouraged to speak informally with the appropriate designated member of staff as soon as they have a concern e.g. form tutor or Year Head. If the concern is directly related to actions taken by the Headteacher then parents are encouraged to make contact with the Headteacher to discuss the issues.

Most concerns are dealt with informally to everyone's satisfaction but in the event that a parent feels this approach has failed then the following formal procedure should be followed.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: -

- Parents are advised to write to the Headteacher, giving details of the concern and enclosing any appropriate paperwork.

A COMPLAINTS FORM IS AVAILABLE FROM THE COLLEGE OFFICE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

- The Headteacher (or designated member of staff) will respond in writing as indicated above. Where necessary the Headteacher (or designated member of staff) will meet with the parents and follow that meeting with a letter summarising the main points.

Stage 2: -

If a parent remains dissatisfied s/he will be directed to write to the Chair of Governors outlining the complaint and explaining the reasons for pursuing it beyond the Headteacher's response. Any relevant paperwork should be enclosed with the letter.

The timescales as listed above will apply. The Chair of Governors will clarify in writing to parents the power of the governors in this process.

The Chair of Governors will speak with the Headteacher and investigate the matter and meet with both the Headteacher and the parents to seek a resolution.

Stage 3: -

In the extremely rare circumstance that a parent is unhappy with the outcome of the above, the Chair of Governors may offer a right of appeal to the Governing Body's Complaints Panel.

Parents who wish to appeal in this way must make their request in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body. The parents should describe the issues in detail and say why they are dissatisfied with the outcomes of the previous stages.

It is important to remember that in order to protect their right of appeal, parents must not write to all governors individually.

Depending on the nature of the complaint the panel will either reconsider or review. The Clerk will arrange and facilitate the complaints panel hearing.

If a parent believes that the Headteacher or Governing Body have acted unreasonably or that current procedures have not been adhered to, then the only recourse is to the Secretary of State for Education.

The LA may be contacted for matters relating to national curriculum, collective worship and RE where the college's process does not provide resolutions.

Also for general advice on complaints parents may contact the LA Complaints Adviser on 01962 846572.

Reviewed: September 2006

Next Review: 2009