

# **CRESSEY COLLEGE**

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## **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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## **Amendment Record**

This Complaints policy is reviewed to ensure its continuing relevance to the direction and processes that it describes. A record of additions, admissions and amendments is given below:

Version	Amendments	Date
1	Annual update to Policy. Minor amendments to formatting and wording. Approved at Management meeting dated 15 Feb 16. Authorised by JH, approved by Head Teacher - AB.	15 Feb 16
2	Annual update to Policy. Change to paragraph 12 reference complaints against the Head Teacher following the establishing of a School Steering Group. Authorised by JH, approved by Head Teacher – AB.	25 Jan 17
3	Annual update to Policy. Approved at Management meeting dated 30 Aug 17. Authorised by JH, approved by Head Teacher – AC.	01 Sept 17

## **Investigation of a complaint**

1. All parents, carers, staff, visitors and Local Authority supporters of young people in our school will have access to a written description of our transparent complaints procedure. This information will be available on our website, in the school and will be available to all significant people on, or prior to, admission.
2. All complaints will be investigated, properly considered and the findings made known to the Head Teacher, complainant and others about whom a complaint has been made.
3. Complaints will initially be considered on an informal basis. Parents, carers and significant others can contact the school directly to discuss their concerns. Young people are able to voice their complaints either individually or by means of a group meeting. This can either be during morning registration time, during tutorials, with the Head Teacher or by a special meeting called with the consensus of the group or to an independent person from the Steering Group.
4. If the matter is an internal complaint that cannot be resolved by either a group meeting or a personal meeting and if the complainants are not satisfied with the informal approach, a formal complaint should be made in writing and addressed to the Head Teacher. Students, parents/carers and significant others can request a Complaints Form or make a complaint in writing to the school office. Staff will assist in the completion of the form/letter if requested to do so.
5. If the matter cannot be resolved at this stage then, providing the issue is not urgent, the Head Teacher will give the complainant a private interview and make a written statement about the core issues of the complaint. This interview will take place no later than 24 hours after the initial complaint has been received. He/she may decide, with the complainant's consent, to involve other members of staff in an attempt to resolve the matter by negotiation.
6. If at this stage a resolution is not found, the matter must be referred to a Complaints Panel. The referral must be made as soon as possible so that the panel can be notified and a date can be set for it to convene. The panel that will hear the complaint will consist of 3 people who were not directly involved in previous considerations of the complaint. If requested and appropriate, one person on the panel will be a member of the Steering Group. The Head Teacher is responsible for the appointment of the panel. Once the formal written complaint and notes from any interviews have been received, the Complaints Panel should be convened within 2 weeks. This is to allow sufficient notice of the hearing for all concerned.

## **Complaints Panel Hearing**

7. The complainant and/or their advocate will be invited to attend the hearing. Parents will also be allowed to attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing if they so wish, if the complaint is made by a student. The hearing itself will be conducted in a non-threatening, supportive way to ensure the complainant feels sufficiently comfortable to be able to explain the complaint in detail. The panel will be sensitive to the needs of the complainant. The complainant will be able to be accompanied by a person of their choice to act as an advocate or to support them if this is requested.
8. The panel will hear the complaint presented by the complainant and then ask them to leave. The panel will then consider all available information and may ask for further investigations to be carried out if necessary, prior to making a decision about the outcome. Once a decision has been reached, the complainant, Head Teacher and where relevant, the

person about whom the complaint has been made, will be informed in writing of the outcome and of any further action that might be taken.

### **Recording the outcome of the complaint**

9. Written records will be kept of all complaints and their outcome, whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, when a complaint was submitted in writing or whether they proceeded to a panel decision. The record will be maintained in the Complaints File. All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential. A copy of findings and records are held on site for viewing by the Head Teacher.

### **The outcome of the complaint**

10. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the Head Teacher will contact the Local Authority when it is expected that the LA's Complaints Procedures will be invoked. At any stage the complainant may wish to circumvent the above procedure and contact their Local Authority, or the Local Authority's Children's Rights Office directly. Alternatively, the complainant can contact Ofsted to voice their complaint. Any complaints or representations concerning issues of safeguarding will be dealt with via Children's Safeguarding procedures.

11. Please note that the complainant and their representative must be kept informed of the progress of the complaint throughout the whole process.

12. If the complaint is against the Head Teacher, the complainant should contact the Chair of the Steering Group whose details can be found on the Cressey College Website.