Complaints Policy

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Complaints Policy

1. Why you should tell us if something has gone wrong….

1.1 The West Herts College Group is committed to the continuous improvement of its services and to monitoring the standard of its provision. The College therefore welcomes and encourages comments, observations, and feedback about the quality of its educational services from students, parents/carers, employers, visitors and all other members of the community.

1.2 The College will treat all complaints seriously, fairly, efficiently and will deal with them positively and with respect.

1.3 We would also like to hear from you if you have any other comments or compliments about a service you have received from the College. This information can also be shared through the formal comments system, or through many of the other feedback mechanisms available to students at the College.

2. What is covered by this policy….

2.1 This policy applies to complaints about:

- A facility or service provided by the College
- The conduct of a member of College staff
- The conduct of a student enrolled at the College

2.2 This policy does not apply to:

- Appeals against admissions decisions, which are covered by the Admissions Policy and Accessibility Statement
- Academic appeals and complaints, which are covered by the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure
- A matter that has been subject to legal proceedings, unless those

proceedings have been put on hold

- A complaint that has already been dealt with through this policy or another College process, or considered by another appropriate body.

2.3 The College will not normally consider anonymous complaints. Exceptionally, however, an anonymous complaint may be considered when the College concludes that there is a compelling case – supported by evidence - for the matter to be investigated, and the investigation is not prejudiced by the anonymity of the complainant.

2.4 If the issue(s) or event(s) triggering the complaint are the subject of, or related to, a police investigation, the College may suspend its complaints process pending the completion of that investigation and where appropriate any criminal proceedings, or may continue in parallel. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis and, where appropriate, in dialogue with the police.

3. Conduct whilst making a complaint….

3.1 Any person raising a complaint through this policy is expected to act professionally, reasonably, and fairly towards College staff and, in particular, to refrain from conduct which is abusive or aggressive.

3.2 Any person making a complaint is expected to maintain confidentiality and avoid publishing to third parties, either on social media or by other means, any correspondence which is part of the complaint.

3.3 If we believe that your complaint is frivolous or vexatious, we reserve the right to terminate our investigation of your complaint. A complaint will be deemed vexatious or frivolous if it is:

- obsessive, harassing, or repetitive
- insistent on pursuing non-meritorious complaints and/or unrealistic, unreasonable outcomes
- insistent on pursuing what may be meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner

- designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- demanding redress which lacks any serious purpose or value.

4. When should you tell us if something has gone wrong….

4.1 You should try to tell us what is wrong as soon as possible so that the College can look into the matter and investigate at the time.

4.2 In the first instance, if possible, you should talk to a member of College staff about your concerns. In the case of complaints relating to students, this would usually be their teacher or tutor. Other complaints can be raised with the Head of School. Many problems are resolved informally by talking to members of staff about the issue that you are concerned about.

4.3 If they are unable to resolve the issue or you would prefer to talk to someone else you can approach a Head of School or Student Support. If you feel at any point your concerns are not being addressed, you can make a formal complaint using the process outlined in section 5.

4.4 Complaints should be raised within three months of the event or issue arising. While the College may deal with complaints received after this deadline, it may be more difficult to reach a suitable outcome if complaints are not received in a timely manner.

5. What to do if you want to tell us about something that has gone wrong….

5.1 If you wish to make a formal complaint you should complete a Complaints Form (**Appendix A**) and return it to the College's Quality team. Alternatively, you can complain in the following ways: by telephone, in person, via email (qualityteam@westherts.ac.uk), by post or via the College website.

5.2 If you are a student over 18 and wish your parent/carer to make a formal complaint on your behalf, you will need to confirm this in writing.

5.3 You should provide any relevant evidence which supports your complaint. For example, relevant email correspondence, photographs and notes of meetings can help us investigate your complaint more effectively.

5.4 If you need help to make a complaint, members of staff working in the

College's Student Services team will be pleased to help you. You can speak to them by telephone, email or in person.

5.5 On receipt of a formal complaint, the Quality team will:

- Acknowledge your complaint by the most appropriate method of communication (e.g. email, telephone, in person)

- Refer the complaint to the most appropriate senior manager in order to resolve the complaint promptly and efficiently

- The senior manager will provide a response confirming the actions taken in writing, or by other agreed methods of communication (e.g. email, telephone, in person) within 10 working days

- Where complex matters require detailed investigation which may extend beyond 10 days you will be kept updated on the progress and status of your complaint

5.6 College staff will handle complaints with an appropriate level of confidentiality, and release information only to those who need it for the purposes of investigating or responding to it. Details of any complaint about a member of staff will be shared with them, so that they can respond to any allegations made against them.

6. What to do if you are not happy with the actions taken following your complaint….

6.1 If you are not satisfied with the actions taken following your complaint, you have the right to appeal to the Chief Executive. You must appeal within 15 days of receiving notification of the actions taken in response to your complaint, clearly specifying your reasons for appeal. Appeals should be made in writing, or via other methods of agreed communication (e.g. email, telephone, in person).

6.2 Upon receipt of an appeal the Chief Executive will review all of the information relating to the complaint, together with any new evidence presented, and may contact you and anyone previously involved in the complaint.

6.3 The Chief Executive will respond to the appeal within 10 working days in writing, or via other methods of agreed communication (e.g. email, telephone, in person).

6.4 The decision of the Chief Executive is final.

6.5 If you have fully exhausted the College's complaints procedure and remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may be able to complain to other external organisations e.g. awarding body, Department for Education.*.

6.6 If you require support to contact external agencies, members of staff working in the College's Student Services team will be pleased to help you.

7. What records will the College keep….

7.1 All records of complaints are kept confidentially for a minimum of three years.

7.2 The Vice Principal for Quality and Standards will ensure that a summary confirming the nature of all complaints received is reported to members of the College's governing body.

8. Higher education complaints and appeals

8.1 Specific higher education, awarding body appeals and complaints processes can be found in the Academic Appeals Policy.

8.2 Further information regarding higher education complaints and appeals can be found on the below links:

- University of Huddersfield students **click here**
- Pearson (HND) students **click here**
- University of Hertfordshire students **click here**

9. How will the College monitor complaints….

9.1 The College is committed to ensuring improved access to all students. To that end, the College monitors complaints in terms of race, sex, and disability.

10. How will the College make improvements following your complaint….

10.1 The College will provide training and development or adapt working practices, as appropriate, in order to learn from complaints and to improve the quality of College services.

Date of Issue	Authorised by	Review date
September 2026	College Leadership Group	July 2027

Complaints Form

Appendix A

For both Barnfield and West Herts College complaints, please return to:

The WHCG Quality Team
West Herts College, Hempstead Road, Watford, WD17 3EZ
Qualityteam@westherts.ac.uk

Name:					**Course: (If applicable)**			
Contact Tel No:					**Campus: (If applicable)**			
Address:								
Please tick	**Student**		**Parent/Carer of Student**		**Employer**		**Visitor or other**	

Details of Complaint (please continue on a separate page if needed)

What is your complaint about?
Please provide an overview of your complaint
What action do you want the College to take in response to your complaint?
Please provide details of any relevant evidence (and attach copies where possible)

Signed: **Date:**