

## COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Last Review:	December 2015
Approved by Governors:	October 2012
Next Review:	December 2017

### Vision

Loreto College is centred in God, rooted in Christ and animated by the spirit of Mary Ward, the founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our vision is that it will be an educational community where each person has the experience of being loved and valued as a sacred individual created by a loving God; a community where students enjoy an enriching and liberating education that helps them grow into the fullness of life and empowers them to be men and women of courage who are alive to the needs of humanity and committed to making a better world.

### Introduction

The College aims to be an educational community which gives expression to the core values of Mary Ward - freedom, justice, sincerity, truth, joy, excellence and internationality.

Loreto College has the highest expectations of personal, academic and professional excellence. This document sets out the College's policy and guidance on the procedures it will follow in the event that a complaint is lodged about the College or any of its' employees. In doing so, the college will be mindful of its core values and of its duty of care to all its staff and students and will endeavour to act at all times with justice, compassion and respect for the dignity and worth of all those involved in the process.

### Preamble

All staff have a responsibility, on receiving informal or formal complaints, to treat them seriously and to deal with them promptly.

The Principal will receive all formal complaints, record their receipt and pass them on to the appropriate Manager.

Managers who receive formal complaints will investigate them promptly and respond in writing within ten working days to the complainant, keep records and send a copy of the correspondence to the Principal.

If the formal complaint relates to the performance or actions of particular members of staff, the line manager of the staff concerned will be asked to investigate the matter and deal with it.

Senior Managers will be asked to deal directly with more serious formal complaints.

The Principal or an appointed deputy will be involved in any appeals against decisions made.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the Complaints Policy & Procedure are operating effectively. The Principal will present to the Governing Body the annual summary and analysis of the range of formal complaints.

Governors will also be involved in appeal against decisions made in response to complaints.

Any complaints that involve the Principal or Assistant Principals will be investigated and dealt with by the Governing Body.

Any complaints relating to safeguarding will be dealt with following the college's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

### **Who might use this Policy & Procedure?**

Anyone who is unhappy with the college can complain. This could be a student, a parent, an employer, a local resident, a contractor, a college employee or anyone else.

The complaint may be made informally to a member of staff or formally to the Principal.

## **THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **INFORMAL STAGE**

1. Anyone who is dissatisfied with the college will normally discuss their problem as soon as possible (and no later than six weeks after it originated) with an appropriate member of staff.
2. For students this will usually be one of their tutors or Head of Hall.
3. Where the complaint comes to someone not directly involved with the area concerned then they will direct the complainant to the appropriate member of staff to deal with the problem. If the appropriate member of staff is not available, a note must be made of the matter with a contact telephone number or address and the note passed on to the member of staff.
4. The appropriate member of staff will try as soon as possible to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the complainant.
5. Informal complaints of substance must be reported on a formal complaints form by the member of staff dealing with them, even when the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. The form is then to be sent to the Principal's Office.
6. If the matter cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant then a formal complaint as outlined below should be considered. No pressure should be applied to the complainant in deciding whether they should or should not make a formal complaint. They must, however, be informed of their right to do so.

### **FORMAL STAGE**

1. Where the problem cannot be solved informally, or if the complainant wishes to make a formal complaint, or even when resolved the informal complaint involves a serious issue, the complaints form, available from the main office, should be filled in.

2. It is important that the complainant clearly identifies on the form the nature of the problem with names, dates and times where relevant and notes their own relationship with the college.
3. The completed form will be sent to the Principal.
4. After recording the receipt of the formal complaint and its general nature, the Principal will direct the complaint to the appropriate Manager for action. A Senior Manager may be the appropriate person to deal directly with some serious complaints as noted in the Policy.
5. The Manager will investigate the complaint and will decide either to dismiss it if the complaint is unwarranted or find some or all of the complaint is justified. If the latter, then the Manager in responding to the complainant will apologise and explain how the situation can be rectified where this is possible. The Manager will also take steps to ensure that, as far as possible, the problem cannot arise in the future. The Manager will keep a file of all documents including notes of meetings that are relevant to the complaint.
6. The Manager must respond to the complainant within ten working days of the Principal receiving the complaint. If the investigation is likely to take longer than ten days, the Manager must inform the complainant of this within the ten days. A copy of all correspondence with the complainant must be sent to the Principal's Office.

#### **APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS**

1. If the complainant wishes to appeal to the Principal against decision made in response to a formal complaint, it can only be on the following grounds:
  - A quality of service failure involving standards of teaching, student guidance, information given, discretions exercised, facilities, resources or accommodation.
  - Unreasonable actions by the college or the college failing to do what is expected of it.
2. Appeals are not possible if:
  - The college has no discretion in the matter such as the level of certain fees, some course requirements and legal restraints.
  - It concerns a disciplinary matter that has already been the subject of an appeal.
  - The complaint can be better made to an outside body that is responsible such as an examination board, the local authority, an employer or a managing agent.
  - The issue is the subject of legal proceedings.

#### **CONDUCT OF APPEALS**

1. The Appeal Panel will consist of up to three Governors, but exclude any person involved in the previous handling of the complaint or who is a subject of the complaint.
2. Unless agreed otherwise by the appellant, ten days notice of the appeal hearing will be given.
3. Each party will be given the right to make a statement and ask questions.
4. The decision of the appeal panel is binding on both parties, who will be informed in writing of the outcome within five working days of the hearing.

#### **SUPPORT**

For all students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the college is happy for someone else to make a complaint on their behalf if they have asked them to do so. Such students requiring help with a complaint may be able to get advice from:

Skill: The National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (telephone 0800 328 5050)

## COMPLAINT FORM

Person complaining. Give your name and your relationship to the college (eg parent, employer, student, etc). If you are a student, give your tutor group):

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Address:

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Postcode:

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Please give details below of the complaint (attach extra pages, any letters, etc and note on this sheet what is attached). If your complaint relates to a course, please name it and – if it is part-time – give the day or evening you attend.

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*(If on behalf of the complainant, please identify by name and status)*

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**FOR OFFICIAL USE**

Customer Complaint Form No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Sent to: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

REMARKS: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ Inits. Date: \_\_\_\_\_