

The Park College Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

This policy outlines Trustee's responsibilities to adopt and make available a Complaints Policy to enable complaints received from any persons who do not work at the college to be dealt with effectively.

- 1.3 Trustees should satisfy themselves that third party providers of community facilities or services and those using the college premises in any way have their own complaints procedure.
- 1.4 All complaints will be dealt with in confidence and matters put to the Trustees' Complaints committee will remain confidential to those committee members. Anyone wishing to make a complaint is also expected to keep the matter confidential.
- 1.5 Trustees have collective responsibility and it is important that a trustee receiving a complaint does not act or try to resolve it alone, but refers the complainant to this policy.
- 1.6 The complaints procedure is available on the college website.

2. General principles of this Complaints Policy

- 2.1 The aim of the policy is to bring about a resolution and/or reconciliation, as informally and quickly as may be reasonably possible.
- 2.2 It is intended to be investigatory, not adversarial, and to allow for an impartial and fair investigation to be undertaken where an informal resolution is not possible.
- 2.3 Those responsible for investigating and responding to a complaint will aim to address the concerns raised, provide an effective response and consider any redress that might be necessary.
- 2.4 Information about students is confidential. Parents wishing to see their child's file must make an appointment with the Principal at that college, at a mutually convenient time.
- 2.5 Confidential personal documents relating to members of staff will not be disclosed.
- 2.6 If the complaint alleges or suggests conduct that might indicate that the individual concerned would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with students, advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before any investigation is initiated by the Principal or Investigating Officer.

3. Matters that are not covered by this Complaints Policy

The following matters cannot be considered under this Complaints Policy. There are separate policies and procedures that deal with them.

- 3.1 Any staff issues, including Capability, Disciplinary, Grievance, Whistle Blowing, and Reorganisation, Redeployment and Redundancy.
- 3.2 Admissions.
- 3.3 Anonymous complaints, unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example serious concerns about child protection issues.
- 3.4 Spurious, serial or persistent complaints.
- 3.5 Statutory assessment of special educational needs.
- 3.6 Student exclusion from college.
- 3.7 Those that are the subject of legal proceedings, or have been so.

- 3.9 Those being considered by the Secretary of State under statutory power.
- 3.10 Complaints that are received more than three months after the incident in question occurred, unless it forms part of an existing concern or complaint under investigation.
- 3.11 Complaints that are received about a member of staff more than three months after they have left the employment of the college, except under the most exceptional circumstances.

4. Procedures to be followed for concerns or complaints falling under this policy

Stage 1 - Informal discussion with member of staff

- 4.1 Parents/carers are encouraged to raise any concerns they have directly with their child's tutor, an appropriate member of staff or the Principal. If they remain unhappy they should make a formal appointment to speak to the Principal. Most concerns can and should be addressed and resolved in this way. Occasionally a resolution is not reached or the matter is too serious to be resolved in this way, and this document outlines the formal procedure which should be followed.
- 4.2 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, they must put their complaint in writing (using Complaint Form 1 at Appendix 1 of this policy), within three calendar months of the incident so it can be considered under Stage 2 of this policy. The complainant should include details which will assist the investigation, and copies of any relevant documents. The complaint should be sent to the college addressed to the Principal or Chair of Trustees as appropriate. If the complainant is unable to do this, they should ask somebody to transcribe and/or submit the form on their behalf, and the college should offer to do this if requested. The Principal or Chair of Trustees should ask someone else to investigate on their behalf if there is a conflict of interest.

STAGE 2A – This applies where the complaint relates to a member of staff in the college

STAGE 2B - This applies where the complaint relates to the Principal or a member of the Trustees (including the Chair)

Stage 2A - Formal Investigation by the Principal as Investigating Officer

- 4.3 The Principal may decide that a complaint should be dealt with under the separate Staff Capability, Staff Disciplinary, Grievance, Whistle Blowing or Reorganisation, Redeployment and Redundancy policies adopted by the Trustees. In this case, it is the Principal's responsibility to start those procedures. Personnel matters are confidential.
- 4.4 The process will be as follows:
- A written complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the Principal (using Acknowledgement Letter 1 at Appendix 4 of this policy) within five college days of receipt of Complaint Form 1, stating that it will be investigated;
 - The member of staff concerned will be informed that a complaint has been received and informed that an investigation will be carried out;
 - It is important that the nature of the complaint is clearly understood, and the Principal may meet with the complainant to clarify the complaint. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or relative if they wish;
 - The Principal will investigate and collect any evidence necessary. Where this involves an interview with a member of staff, they may be accompanied by a friend/representative;
 - Students should only be interviewed where the nature of the complaint is sufficiently serious to warrant it and adult witnesses are not available;
 - The member of staff concerned will be provided with a copy of the complaint and supporting information, including evidence collected by the Principal. Once they have had an opportunity to consider it, the member of staff concerned will be invited to meet with the Principal to present their view and any supporting evidence. The member of staff concerned may be accompanied at this meeting by a friend or representative;
 - Within ten college days of sending the acknowledgement letter, the Principal will write to the complainant and the member of staff giving the outcome of the investigation and the Principal's decision on the complaint, or explaining why this cannot be achieved within the ten college days and giving a reasonable date by which the outcome of the investigation will be sent in writing.

- 4.5 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Principal's decision and/or the way in which the Principal investigated the complaint, they may ask the Trustees's Complaints committee to consider those matters under Stage 3 of this policy.

Stage 2B - Formal Investigation by the Chair of Trustees as Investigating Officer (or the Principal or Vice-Chair, where the complaint relates to the Chair of Trustees)

- 4.6 The process will be as follows:
- A written complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the Chair of Trustees (or the Principal or Vice-Chair, where the complaint relates to the Chair of Trustees) (using Acknowledgement Letter 2 at Appendix 5 of this policy) within five college days of receipt of Complaint Form 1, stating that it will be investigated;
 - The Principal or trustee concerned will be informed that a complaint has been received and informed that an investigation will be carried out;
 - It is important that the nature of the complaint is clearly understood, and the Chair of Trustees, Vice-Chair or Principal may meet with the complainant to clarify the complaint. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or relative if they wish;
 - The Chair of Trustees, Vice-Chair or Principal will investigate and collect evidence as necessary. This may include interviewing witnesses;
 - Students should only be interviewed where the nature of the complaint is sufficiently serious to warrant it and adult witnesses are not available;
 - The Principal or trustee concerned will be provided with a copy of the complaint and supporting information, including evidence collected by the Chair of Trustees (or the Principal or Vice-Chair, where the complaint relates to the Chair of Trustees). Once they have had an opportunity to consider it, the Principal or trustee will be invited to meet with the Chair of Trustees (or the Principal or Vice-Chair, where the complaint relates to the Chair of Trustees) to present their view and any supporting evidence. The Principal or trustee may be accompanied at this meeting by a friend or representative;
 - Within ten college days of sending the letter of acknowledgement, the Chair of Trustees (or the Principal or Vice-Chair, where the complaint relates to the Chair of Trustees) will write to the complainant and the Principal or trustee giving the outcome of the investigation and the decision on the complaint, or explaining why this cannot be achieved within the ten college days and giving a reasonable date by which the outcome of the investigation will be sent in writing.
- 4.7 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Chair of Trustees', Vice-Chair's or Principal's decision and/or the way in which they investigated the complaint, they may ask the Trustees's Complaints committee to consider those matters under Stage 3 of this policy.

Stage 3- Formal Hearing by the Trustees's Complaints committee (a panel of Trustees will only consider a matter that has already been investigated at stage 2A or 2B)

- 4.8 The reasons for dissatisfaction must be put in writing (using Complaint Form 2 at Appendix 2 of this policy), and this will provide the focus of the Trustees's Complaints committee's meeting. The complainant must send Form 2 to the college addressed to the clerk of the Trustees within 15 college days of receipt of the decision letter sent to them by the Chair of Trustees, Vice-Chair or the Principal. If the complainant is unable to do this, they should ask somebody to transcribe and/or submit the form on their behalf, and the college should offer to do this if requested. The form should state if there are any dates and times in the following 2 months that the complainant would be unavailable to attend a committee meeting.

Arranging the meeting – actions for the clerk

- 4.9 The process for the clerk will be as follows:
- A written complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the clerk of the Trustees within five college days of receipt of Complaint Form 2, (using Acknowledgement Letter 3 at Appendix 6 of this policy). The letter should:
 - State that it will be considered by a panel of Trustees, usually no sooner than 12 college days and no later than 20 college days from the date that the acknowledgement letter is sent, and should be cc'ed to the Principal and Chair of Trustees (and the Investigating Officer, if the investigation was not carried out by either);
 - Request copies of any supporting documents to be submitted and the names of any witness(es) that all parties wish to call within five working days of receipt of the letter. It is the Principal's decision whether or not to ask members of college staff to attend the meeting, subject to the discretion of the committee chair;

- Within 5 college days of sending the acknowledgement letter, the clerk will arrange a panel of three Trustees to consider the complaint, to meet usually no sooner than 12 college days and no later than 20 college days from the date that the acknowledgement letter is sent;
- The clerk should check whether Trustees have a conflict of interest (including, but not limited to, being in a relationship with the complainant or having an involvement in the incident that is the basis for the complaint) that would prevent them from sitting on the panel. If they do, they should declare this conflict of interest to the clerk and not sit on the panel. Staff Trustees should also not sit on the panel – where there aren't enough Trustees to form a panel, Trustees from another Trustees can be used. Academies must ensure that one panel member is independent of the management and running of the college;
- The clerk should ensure that the Investigating Officer is available to attend the meeting to explain to the panel the decision made, and the reasons for it, as a result of the investigation that took place at Stage 2;
- When the panel is set up within 5 college days of the acknowledgement letter being sent, the clerk will write an invitation letter (using the Invitation Letter at Appendix 7 of this policy) to the complainant, the Principal and Chair of Trustees (and the Investigating Officer, if the investigation was not carried out by either). The letter should:
 - State the meeting date, time and location, and the names of the panel members;
 - Advise all parties of their right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/adviser;
 - State that the meeting will go ahead in the absence of the complainant, unless a reason for absence acceptable to the committee is presented prior to or at the beginning of the meeting;
 - Include the agenda for the meeting, which includes the items listed below:
 - a cover sheet stating the meeting date, time and location, names of all participants in the meeting including the clerk, complainant, Investigating Officer, panel members and any witnesses, and a table of contents;
 - procedure for the meeting;
 - a copy of the complaint and any supporting documents which have been received from any of the participants;
 - a copy of the college's Complaints Policy

Committee Meeting – guidance for panel members

- 4.10 It is important that the review panel hearing is independent and impartial, and that it is seen to be so.
- 4.11 The aim of the hearing, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the college and the complainant. However, it must be recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.
- 4.12 While this is a formal process, the meeting should be as informal as possible and not be inhibiting or intimidating to the complainant, as many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents/carers also often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The committee Chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible.
- 4.13 Everyone must be treated with respect and courtesy and both the complainant and the Investigating Officer should be given the opportunity to state their case without undue interruption. Exceptionally, in situations of undue aggression, or where relationships have deteriorated to the point that a hearing is unlikely to be able to make reasonable progress, the committee may hear the parties' statements separately, i.e. with only one party present, in turn, before calling them together for questions to be put. In this situation, it is important that no additional information is introduced that is not made available to the other party.
- 4.14 Information relating to the complaint and the hearing is confidential and should not be discussed outside of the committee meeting by any party.

Committee Meeting – proceedings and actions for panel members

Half an hour prior to the meeting, committee members should meet at the venue to discuss any points that may need clarifying with the clerk. The clerk will remain with the panel throughout the process to give advice to the panel.

- 4.15 The process for the committee Chair will be as follows (with the committee Chair using the "PROCEDURE AT COMPLAINT COMMITTEE MEETING" document at Appendix 3 of this policy for guidance):
- Ensure that prior to the meeting, no party is left alone with the committee members other than the clerk;

- Invite all parties to enter the room and welcome everyone, and invite those present to introduce themselves;
- Check that the complainant received the papers and a copy of the meeting procedure in advance;
- Explain the remit of the panel, and that the aim of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the college and the complainant;
- Summarise the procedure to be followed and provide any clarification requested, and explain that the Trustees' complaints committee will consider the reasons for the complainant's dissatisfaction as given in writing in Form 2;
- Invite the complainant to confirm that the complaint is as set out on their form/letter and the resolution they are seeking;
- Take control of the meeting and ensure it is conducted fairly according to the policy;
- Explain that the panel are to remain impartial during the course of the meeting, and that any participant may be asked to leave the meeting if their behaviour becomes unacceptable, abusive or offensive, and the meeting concluded in their absence;
- State that papers distributed in advance will be taken as read and ask all parties to refer to them by page number and not quote from them at length;
- Invite the complainant to give the reason for their dissatisfaction with the outcome of stage 2, drawing key points to the committee's attention. This should only refer to information that has already been submitted;
- Should the complainant wish to call witnesses, the committee Chair will consider each request individually, consulting committee members as appropriate. Each witness, having contributed their information, may be questioned by the Investigating Officer and the committee members in turn, and the witness will then leave the meeting;
- Invite the Investigating Officer to question the complainant on what has been presented;
- Invite committee members to question the complainant on what has been presented;
- Invite the Investigating Officer to give details of their investigation, similarly considering each request to call witnesses as above;
- Invite the complainant to question the Investigating Officer on what has been presented;
- Invite committee members to question the Investigating Officer on what has been presented;
- Invite the complainant to sum up and make a final statement. New information is not to be introduced;
- Invite the Investigating Officer to sum up and make a final statement. New information is not to be introduced;
- Tell parties that the committee will now consider its decision, and the clerk will communicate that decision in writing within 5 college days;
- Ask all parties to leave the meeting so the committee can consider the complaint and evidence presented, reach a decision and agree the reasons for that decision. The clerk remains to advise the committee and record its decision.

Resolving a concern or complaint

- 4.16 Options for resolving the concern or complaint include:
- An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part;
 - An explanation;
 - An admission that something could have been handled differently or better;
 - An explanation of the steps taken as a result of this complaint, to ensure that the situation does not reoccur;
 - Confirmation that the policy will be reviewed in the light of the concern or complaint;
 - An apology.

Options for the Complaints Committee at stage 3 include the above, and/or to:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- Refer a complaint back to the Principal in whole or in part to deal with under a different policy, such as Staff Capability or Disciplinary;
- Recommend changes to the college's systems or procedures to ensure that the situation does not reoccur.

DfE

- 4.17 If the Complaints Policy has been exhausted and the complainant remains dissatisfied following the outcome of Stage 3, they have the right to refer the matter to the Department for Education. Whilst the DfE will not overturn an college's decision about a complaint, they will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly in any of the following three areas:

- Where there is undue delay or the college did not comply with its own complaints procedure when considering a complaint
- Where the college is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State
- Where an college has failed to comply with any other legal obligation

If they find that it has not been, they will request that the complaint is looked at again and procedures meet the requirements set out in the Regulations.

5. Dealing with unreasonable complaints/complainants

- 5.1 Complaints should be dealt with fairly and impartially, and colleges should not normally limit the contact complainants have with the college. However, colleges do not tolerate unacceptable behaviour towards staff, and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.
- 5.2 Unreasonable complainants are defined as ‘those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the college, hinder the college’s consideration of their or other people’s complaints’.
- 5.3 A complaint/complainant may be regarded as unreasonable if the complainant:
- Refuses to articulate their complaint, or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance and being invited by the Principal or Investigating Officer to resubmit their complaint;
 - Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
 - Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
 - Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with this Complaints Policy or with good practice;
 - Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
 - Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to resolve a complaint, and seeks to have them replaced;
 - Changes the basis of their complaint as the investigation proceeds;
 - Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
 - Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into a complaint, where the college’s Complaints Policy has been fully and properly implemented and completed, including referral to the Department for Education;
 - Seeks an unrealistic or unachievable outcome;
 - Makes excessive demands on college time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email or by telephone while the complaint is in process;
 - Refuses to cease behaving unreasonably, despite being asked to in writing by the Principal;
 - Makes a complaint knowing it to be false;
 - Makes a complaint using falsified information;
 - Publishes information in relation to a complaint in the media, including but not limited to social media websites and newspapers;
 - Behaves maliciously face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically;
 - Behaves aggressively face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically;
 - Uses threats, intimidation or violence face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically;
 - Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically.
- 5.4 Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a college while a complaint is being processed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.
- 5.5 Whenever possible, the Principal or Investigating Officer will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally if their complaint is deemed to be unreasonable, specifying the reasons why. The complainant should be given the opportunity to resubmit their complaint in a reasonable timeframe.
- 5.6 Whenever possible, the Principal will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally if their behaviour is deemed to be unreasonable. If the unreasonable behaviour continues the Principal will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the college causing a significant level of disruption, the college may specify methods

of communication and limit the number of contacts that can be made in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

- 5.7 In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the Principal will contact the police immediately, and will write to the complainant outlining their concerns and actions taken, and stating that the police have been contacted. Actions taken may include banning an individual from the college.
- 5.8 Where the Principal, Investigating Officer or the Trustees's Complaints committee decides that a complaint is unreasonable, and is satisfied that the complainant has not resubmitted their complaint despite being given the opportunity to; or that the complainant is behaving unreasonably, despite being asked in writing by the Principal to cease this behaviour, they may dismiss the complaint and consider it to be resolved through lack of co-operation by the complainant, and the process to be completed.

Appendix 2

COMPLAINT FORM 2 to be sent to the college for the attention of the clerk of the Trustees

Please note, the Trustees' complaints committee will not consider this form at Stage 3 until the complaint has been investigated at Stage 2A or 2B.

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary. Any supporting documents should be submitted with this form, including any witness statements.

Please summarise the reason(s) for your dissatisfaction with the outcome of the investigation of your complaint at Stage 2A or 2B:

Please state what outcome(s) you seek:

The names of your witnesses must be given here:

Dates and times that I would not be able to attend the committee meeting in the next 2 months:

PROCEDURE AT COMPLAINT COMMITTEE MEETING

Before the meeting begins, during the pre-meeting of the committee and during any adjournment of the meeting, no member of the committee should be alone with any party (i.e. member of staff, Principal, trustee or witness), except for the clerk

At the start of the meeting, all parties should enter the room together

Welcome – committee Chair asks those present to introduce themselves

Committee Chair explains the point of the meeting, that the panel are to resolve the complaint, and achieve reconciliation between the college and the parent. The committee Chair will explain that the panel are to remain impartial during the course of the meeting, and that any participant may be asked to leave the meeting if their behaviour becomes unacceptable, abusive or offensive, and the meeting concluded in their absence. The committee Chair will then:

- Ask parent(s)/or their representative/or both to present their case (with witnesses where appropriate), and to confirm the outcome that they are seeking
- Invite parties (i.e. Investigating Officer and committee members) to ask the parent questions
- Ask the Investigating Officer to present their case (with witnesses where appropriate)
- Invite parties (i.e. parent(s), parent's representative and committee members) to ask the Investigating Officer questions

All parties are requested to make notes during the hearing, refrain from interrupting others and to ask questions at the appropriate times during the meeting.

- Check that all points either party wishes to raise have been covered
- Ask the parent(s)/or their representative/or both to sum up if they wish to (new information is not to be introduced)
- Ask the Investigating Officer to sum up if they wish to (new information is not to be introduced)
- Tell parties that the committee will now consider its decision, and the clerk will communicate that decision to them in writing within **5 college days**
- Ask all parties to leave the meeting so the committee can consider the complaint and evidence presented, reach a decision and agree the reasons for that decision. The clerk remains to advise the committee and record its decision

Acknowledgement Letter 1

Name
Address line 1
Address line 2
Address line 3
Post code

Private & Confidential

[Date]

Dear [name of complainant]

Re: Complaint about a member of staff – [name of college]

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of Complaint Form 1, and to let you know that I will investigate this complaint as Investigating Officer. It is important that the nature of the complaint is clearly understood, and I may need to meet with you or contact you to clarify the complaint. If we meet to discuss this complaint formally, you may be accompanied by a friend or relative if they wish.

I will investigate and collect any evidence necessary. The member of staff concerned will be provided with a copy of the complaint and supporting information, including evidence collected by myself. Once they have had an opportunity to consider it, the member of staff concerned will be invited to meet with me to present their view and any supporting evidence.

Within **ten college days** of the date on this acknowledgement letter, I will write to you and the member of staff giving the outcome of my investigation and my decision on the complaint, or explaining why this cannot be achieved within the ten college days and giving a reasonable date by which the outcome of the investigation will be sent in writing.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of Principal]
Principal & Investigating Officer [name of college]

Acknowledgement Letter 2

Name
Address line 1
Address line 2
Address line 3
Post code

Private & Confidential

[Date]

Dear [name of complainant]

Re: Complaint about the Principal or a member of the Trustees – [name of college]

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of Complaint Form 1, and to let you know that I will investigate this complaint as Investigating Officer. It is important that the nature of the complaint is clearly understood, and I may need to meet with you or contact you to clarify the complaint. If we meet to discuss this complaint formally, you may be accompanied by a friend or relative if they wish.

I will investigate and collect any evidence necessary. The Principal/member of the Trustees [delete as appropriate] will be provided with a copy of the complaint and supporting information, including evidence collected by myself. Once they have had an opportunity to consider it, the Principal/member of the Trustees [delete as appropriate] concerned will be invited to meet with me to present their view and any supporting evidence.

Within **ten college days** of the date on this acknowledgement letter, I will write to you and the Principal/member of the Trustees [delete as appropriate] giving the outcome of my investigation and my decision on the complaint, or explaining why this cannot be achieved within the ten college days and giving a reasonable date by which the outcome of the investigation will be sent in writing.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of Chair of Trustees/Vice-Chair/Principal] [delete as appropriate]
Chair of Trustees/Vice-Chair/Principal [delete as appropriate] & Investigating Officer [name of college]

Acknowledgement Letter 3

Name
Address line 1
Address line 2
Address line 3
Post code

Private & Confidential

[Date]

Dear [name of complainant]

Re: Complaint – [name of college]

I have received Complaint Form 2 which states that you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation carried out by the Investigating Officer. I received Complaints Form 2 on [date], and I am writing as stated in the college's Complaints Policy to acknowledge receipt, and to advise you that your complaint will be investigated by a panel of Trustees usually no sooner than **12 college days** and no later than **20 college days** from the date this acknowledgement letter is sent. I will send an invitation letter and agenda to you as soon as the meeting has been arranged.

I am also requesting, as stated in the college's Complaints Policy, that you send me any supporting documents you wish to submit, and the names of any witness(es) that you wish to call, within **5 working days** of receipt of this acknowledgement letter. It is the Principal's decision whether or not to ask members of college staff to attend the meeting, subject to the discretion of the committee Chair.

If you decide to withdraw your complaint in the meantime, please let me know as soon as possible. I can be contacted on [phone number], or more easily at [e-mail address]. Please feel free to contact me if you have any other questions in the meantime.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of clerk]
Clerk to the Trustees of [name of college]

cc.
Principal
Chair of Trustees
Investigating Officer (if the Stage 2 investigation was not carried out by the Principal or Chair of Trustees)

Invitation Letter

Name
Address line 1
Address line 2
Address line 3
Post code

Private & Confidential

[Date]

Dear [name of complainant]

Re: Complaint – [name of college]

Following my letter to you dated [date] acknowledging receipt of Complaints Form 2, I am writing to you and copying in the Principal and Chair of Trustees [and Investigating Officer, if the Stage 2 investigation was not carried out by the Principal or Chair of Trustees] as stated in the college's Complaints Policy to:

- (a) confirm that a meeting of the Trustees' Complaints committee will be arranged for **[date]** at **[time]** at **[venue]**, and the panel members will be [names of panel members];
- (b) advise all parties of your right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/adviser;
- (c) state that the meeting will go ahead in the absence of the complainant, unless a reason for absence acceptable to the committee is presented prior to or at the beginning of the meeting.

I am also enclosing a copy of the agenda for the meeting which is being sent to all participants. The agenda includes:

- a cover sheet stating the meeting date, time and location, names of all participants in the meeting including the clerk, complainant, Investigating Officer, panel members and any witnesses, and a table of contents;
- procedure for the meeting;
- a copy of the complaint and any supporting documents which have been received from any of the participants;
- a copy of the college's Complaints Policy

If you decide to withdraw your complaint in the meantime, please let me know as soon as possible. I can be contacted on [phone number], or more easily at [e-mail address]. Please feel free to contact me if you have any other questions in the meantime.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of clerk]
Clerk to the Trustees of [name of college]

cc.
Principal
Chair of Trustees
Investigating Officer (if the Stage 2 investigation was not carried out by the Principal or Chair of Trustees)
Procedures to be followed for concerns or complaints falling under this policy