



# **BCC COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY**

Accredited by the  
 **BRITISH  
COUNCIL**  
for the teaching  
of English in the UK



## **Bournemouth City College**

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## **SUMMARY:**

Bournemouth City College (BCC) intends to provide clear guidance on key principles of an effective and efficient complaint management system. This policy is designed to be used as a guide for the management and employees of BCC on how complaints will be managed by BCC in accordance with its documented policy. BCC is responsible for adopting and promoting its complaint handling policy to ensure that staff adhere to it through regular reporting and reviews.

This document includes:

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All BCC employees must follow the procedures and steps set out in this document to ensure that consistency is followed at all times. This policy is reviewed and amended due to business needs and requirements on a regular basis.

<b>Policy created by:</b>	<b>Policy created:</b>	<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	<b>Last Reviewed:</b>
Turcekova	July 2019	July 2020	July 2021	

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

This policy intends to ensure that BCC handles complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively. Our complaint management system is intended to:

- Enable BCC to respond to issues raised by people making complaints in a timely and cost-effective way
- Boost employee confidence in our administrative process
- Provide information that can be used by BCC to deliver quality improvements in our procedures and processes, staff and complaint handling

This policy provides guidance to our staff and people who wish to make a complaint on the key principles and concepts of our complaint management system.

### Scope

This policy applies to all members of staff receiving or managing complaints regarding our services, products (English language courses, accommodation etc.), staff and complaint handling.

### Organisational Commitment

BCC expects all staff at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling. The following table outlines the nature of the commitment expected from staff and the way that commitment should be implemented.

Who	Commitment	How
Management	Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution  Establish and manage our complaint management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Report publicly</li><li>- Provide adequate support and directions to key staff responsible for complaint handling</li><li>- Regularly review reports, trends and issues arising from complaints</li><li>- Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints and to resolve them promptly</li><li>- Encourage staff to make recommendations</li></ul>

		<p>for system improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognize and reward good complaint handling by staff</li> <li>- Support recommendations for service, product, staff and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.</li> <li>- Recruit, train and empower staff to resolve complaints promptly and in accordance with BCC policies and procedures</li> </ul>
<b>Staff whose duties include complaint handling</b>	Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints</li> <li>- Assist people to make a complaint, if needed</li> <li>- Comply with this policy and its associated procedures</li> <li>- Keep informed about best practices in complaint handling</li> <li>- Provide feedback to management on issues arising from complaints</li> <li>- Provide suggestions to management on ways to improve the BCC complaints management system</li> <li>- Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis of complaint data as directed by management</li> </ul>
<b>All staff</b>	Understand and comply with BCC complaint handling practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</li> <li>- Be aware of BCC complaint handling policies and procedures</li> <li>- Assist people who wish to make complaints and to access the BCC complaints process</li> <li>- Be alert to complaints and assist staff</li> </ul>

		<p>handling complaints to resolve matters promptly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide feedback to management on issues arising from complaints</li> <li>- Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis and evaluation of complaint data as directed by management</li> </ul>
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## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

### Complaint

Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

### Complaint management system

All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by us in the management of complaints.

### Dispute

An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.

### Feedback

Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our products, services or complaint handling where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

### Service request

The definition of a service request will vary depending on the organisation's core business. However, it is likely to include:

- Request for approval
- Request for action

- Routine inquiries about the organisation’s business
- Request for the provision of services and assistance
- Reports of failure to comply with laws regulated by the organisation
- Request for explanation of policies, procedures and decisions

## Grievance

A clear, formal written statement by an individual staff member about another staff member or a work related problem.

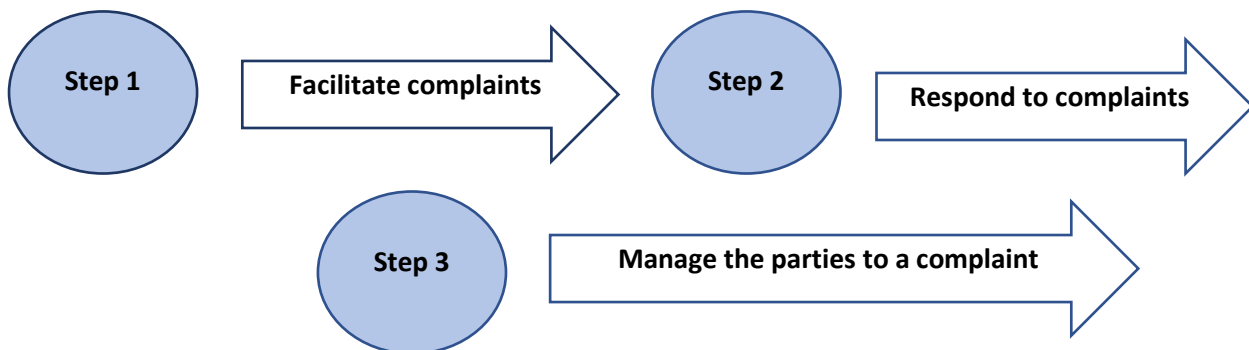
## Policy

A statement of instruction that sets out how we should fulfil our vision, mission and goals.

## Procedure

A statement or instruction that sets out how our policies will be implemented and by whom.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES



## Facilitate complaints

### People focus

- BCC is committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures, products and complaint handling
- Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame
- People making a complaint will be provided with information about our complaint handling procedures, multiple and accessible ways to make complaints

- People will be listened to, treated with respect by staff and be actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate
- People will be provided with reasons for our decisions and any options for redress or review

### **No detriment to people making complaints**

BCC will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

### **Anonymous complaints**

BCC accepts anonymous complaints and will carry out an investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.

### **Accessibility**

- BCC will ensure that information about how and where complaints may be to or about us is well publicised.
- BCC will ensure that our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance
- If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making / resolution of their complaint, BCC will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish.

### **No charge**

Complaining to BCC is free of charge.

## **Responding to complaints**

### **Early resolution**

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with the BCC complaint handler.

### **Responsiveness**

- BCC will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.

- The BCC complaint handler will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and /or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.
- BCC is committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible of the following: the complaint process, the expected time frames for our actions, the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay, their likely involvement in the process, the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.
- BCC will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issue and /or complaints may be directed
- BCC will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

### **Objectivity and fairness**

- BCC will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable objective and unbiased manner
- BCC will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any member of staff whose conduct or service is being complained about
- Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by the Managing Director

### **Responding flexibly**

- A BCC designated member of staff is empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible.
- BCC adopts flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/ or their representatives
- BCC will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and /or their representatives in the process as far as possible.

### **Confidentiality**

- BCC will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate



- Any personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by BCC as permitted under the relevant privacy and confidentiality policies and obligations.

## **Manage the parties to a complaint**

### **Complaints involving multiple agencies**

Where a complaint involves multiple organisations, BCC will work with the other organisation/s where possible, to ensure that communication with the person making the complaint and /or their representative is clear and coordinated.

Subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations, communication and information sharing between the parties will also be organised to facilitate a timely response to the complaint.

Where a complaint involves multiple areas, responsibility for communicating with the person making the complaint and/or their representative will also be coordinated.

### **Complaints involving multiple parties**

When similar complaints are made by related parties BCC will try to arrange to communicate with a single representative of the group.

### **Empowerment of staff**

All designated members of staff managing complaints are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

All designated members of staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of the BCC complaint management system.

### **Managing unreasonable conduct by people making complaints**

- BCC is committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or a complaint.
- When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and deficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.

## COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

When responding to complaints, staff should act in accordance with our complaint handling procedures as well as any other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints.

Staff should also consider any relevant legislation and /or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

BCC will follow five key stages in our management system:

### 1) Receipt of complaint

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, BCC will record the complaint and its supporting information.

Record of the complaint will include:

- The contact information of the person making the complaint
- Issues raised by the person making the complaint and the outcome/s they want
- Any other relevant and additional supporting documents

### 2) Acknowledgment of complaints

- BCC will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly and preferably within 2 working days.
- Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (Email, letter) for communication with the person making a complaint.

### 3) Initial assessment and addressing of complaint

- After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, BCC will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control.
- BCC will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.
- When determining how a complaint will be managed, BCC will consider:
  - How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
  - Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety
  - How the person making the complaint is being affected
  - The risks involved if resolution of complaint is delayed
  - Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations

### 4) Addressing complaints

- After assessing the complaint, BCC will consider how to manage it. To manage a complaint BCC may:
  - Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
  - Gather information from the product, person or area that the complaint is about
  - Investigate the claims made in the complaint

BCC will keep the person making the complaint up to date on our progress, particularly if there are any delays. BCC will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium.

#### **5) Providing reasons for decisions**

Following the consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action we took
- The reason/s for our decision
- The remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place
- Any option for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

#### **6) Closing the complaint, record keeping, redress and review**

BCC will keep comprehensive records about:

- How we managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations)
- Any outstanding actions that need to be followed up

BCC will make sure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the Managing Director.

#### **7) Alternative avenues for dealing with complaints**

BCC will inform people who make complaints to or about us about any internal or external review options available to them (*including any relevant Ombudsman or other bodies*).

#### **8) The three levels of complaint handling**

**Level 1** - Frontline complaint handling and early resolution of complaints

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**Level 2** - Internal review of complaints and /or complaint handling (*may include further investigation of issues raised and use of Alternative Dispute Resolution options*)

**Level 3** - External review of complaints and/or complaint handling by organisations.

BCC aims to resolve complaints at the first level. Wherever possible staff will be adequately equipped to respond to complaints, including being given appropriate authority, training and supervision.

Where this is not possible, BCC may decide to escalate the complaint to the Managing Director, as a second level of the complaint handling procedures.

Where a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of the BCC review of their complaint, they may seek an external review of the BCC decision.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING**

### **Analysis and evaluation of complaints**

BCC will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis.

Regular reports will be run on:

- The number of complaints received
- The outcome of complaints , including matters resolved at the frontline
- Issues arising from complaints
- Systematic issues identified
- Number of requests we receive for internal and /or external review of our complaint handling

Regular analysis of these reports will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of BCC customer service and make improvements. The reports and their analysis will be provided to the Managing Director for review.

### **Monitoring of the complaint management system**

BCC will continually monitor the complaint management system to:

- ensure that it is effective in responding to and resolving complaints
- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system

- monitoring may include the use of audits, complaint satisfaction surveys and online listening tools and alerts

### **Continuous improvement**

BCC is committed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. BCC will:

- support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling by staff
- regularly review the complaints management system and complaint data
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of BCC analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system