

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## Responding to Complaints from Students and Parents

CATEGORY	<b>Education</b>
POLICY OWNER	<b>Vice Principal - Student Life</b>
DATE & VERSION	<b>26-09-2023 - Version 3.3</b>
APPROVED BY	<b>Principal</b>
REVIEW FREQUENCY	<b>Annual</b>

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## 1. Policy Purpose

UWC Atlantic (the College) aims to ensure that any concerns are dealt with sympathetically, constructively and efficiently.

The College aims to clarify any issues about which a student/parent is unsure and to hear and, if well founded, address any complaints in a timely fashion.

## 2. Policy Statement

This policy outlines the procedure for students and parents to make a complaint and what to do if they are not satisfied with the response.

## 3. Policy Implementation

### 3.1 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

In the majority of cases, a complaint raised is best resolved by the person responsible for the complaint. If possible an appropriate resolution should be sought in this way. Complaints should be raised as soon as possible and will not normally be considered after 3 months.

All complaints and any responses will be recorded on a centralised database, noting the date, details and the outcome of the complaint. This will include whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.

The record of complaints will identify those complaints that relate to boarding provision.

#### Outcomes:

- There are four possible outcomes to most complaints.
  - A complaint is resolved through clarification;
  - There is agreement that a complaint is valid and a course of action is agreed;
  - There is no or insufficient evidence to substantiate the complaint and the matter is closed with no further action recommended;
  - The complaint escalated to the next stage due to an inability to agree.

Should the matter not be resolved within ten working/school days then the student/parent is advised to seek resolution through stage 2.

### 3.2 Stage 2 - Formal Resolution - Principal's Investigation

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Unresolved complaints or complaints with an unsatisfactory outcome should be put in writing to the Principal\*.

The Principal will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working/school days and take action to investigate. The Principal may delegate aspects of the investigation. The Principal will keep written records of all correspondence, meetings and/or interviews held in relation to the complaint.

The Principal will aim to respond to the complaint within 15 working/school days. The written response will detail the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint. Wherever possible the Principal will arrange to speak/meet up with the student/parent to go through their conclusions before they receive the written response.

### 3.3 **Stage 3 – Formal Resolution - Governors’ Review**

Complaints should rarely reach stage 3 but the Board of Governors is prepared to form a panel to review the previous stages (1 and 2) if necessary.

A student/parent must write to the Chair of the Board of Governors within 15 days of receiving the report following stage 2 from the Principal.

The Chair of the Board of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working/school days and organise a panel.

The panel will consist of a minimum of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the College.

The Chair of the Panel will be a member of the Board of Governors. The Chair of the Panel will schedule a meeting of the panel to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 15 working days. Further information or investigation may be needed prior to the panel meeting. The panel will consider all relevant facts and all parties shall be given a fair hearing. All written evidence will be circulated to all parties 5 working days before the meeting.

The parent/student may attend the panel meeting and be accompanied by one other person.

The panel will write to the student/parent informing them of their findings and recommendations and the reasons behind it within 5 days of the panel meeting. All parties will also receive a copy. The decision of the panel will be final.

**Important to note:**

**If you have any concerns about the welfare of a student:** The Safeguarding & Respectful Community policy sets out UWC Atlantic’s commitment to safeguard all members of the College Community and details how to report any signs, concerns or incidents.

This policy does not cover concerns brought by staff in pursuance of their work for the College. Staff should contact the HR Manager for details of the appropriate policy.

All information will be dealt with sensitively and shared only as appropriate. Records including all correspondence and statements will remain confidential and be kept for 7 years.

Students and parents should be reassured that a complaint raised will be taken in good faith and not affect the student adversely in any way.

All timescales detailed apply to complaints raised during term time. These may need to be extended during a holiday period.

Anonymous complaints are recorded but investigation is at the discretion of the Principal except in the case of safeguarding or criminal conduct.

Formal complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

**4. Related Information**

**4.1 Relevant Policies**

Other College policies that should be consulted in conjunction with this should include:

- Safeguarding and Respectful Community Policy

**5. Policy Measurement and Reporting**

This policy is reviewed annually by the HR Committee of the Board and the Head of HR as part of the review cycle. Part of this review process will consider to what extent the policy is being used as an active working document. The policy is communicated to the whole school community on Every and is available on the UWCA website.

\*Any complaint about the Principal should be put in writing to the Chair of the Board of Governors. Any complaint about a member of the Board of Governors should be put in writing to the Chair of the

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Board of Governors. Any complaint about the Chair of the Board of Governors should be put in writing to the Chair of the HR Committee.