

Regent's Park College Oxford
GRIEVANCE POLICY
Members of College Staff

1 Introduction

1.1 This document gives details of the informal and formal procedures for employees of the College who wish the College to consider and, if necessary, respond to serious dissatisfaction with academic, financial or other aspects of College life. It applies to cases that do not at first involve harassment or disciplinary procedures, which are dealt with in the College's Code of Practice Relating to Harassment and in the Bylaws relating to Discipline, though such procedures may follow as one possible outcome of this process.

1.2 Any person who is in the employment of the college who believes that he or she has a legitimate grievance against a colleague may submit a written complaint under the formal procedure set out in Section 3 to the relevant College Officer and may wish to do so immediately if the circumstances are sufficiently serious. Complainants are, however, strongly encouraged in the first instance to discuss their grievance directly with the relevant College Officer under the informal procedure set out in Section 2.

1.3 Anonymous complainants or complaints made on behalf of someone else will not be considered.

1.4 In the case of employees the decision of Governing Body is final.

2 Informal Procedure

2.1 Anyone who feels that they have been poorly treated by a colleague, or who believes that they have a grievance against another member of staff, is strongly urged to address the issue informally with that colleague first before proceeding with any of the further steps listed below. Concerns about college policies or employment matters should be first addressed informally with line managers or other suitable members of staff. If the complainant does not feel that the issue has been satisfactorily addressed by such initial contact they should proceed to 2.2.

2.2 Under the informal procedure, the complainant is asked to raise his or her complaint with the relevant College Officer. This informal procedure is intended to encourage discussion and understanding of the problem, and in some cases may lead to its resolution without submission of a formal complaint. The complainant can be accompanied at any stage by a colleague.

2.3 The relevant College Officers are as follows:

- 2.3.1 For undergraduate academic matters: the Senior Tutor;
- 2.3.2 For graduate academic matters: the Tutor for Graduate Students;
- 2.3.3 For ministerial training matters: a Fellow in Pastoral Studies;
- 2.3.4 For other behavioural matters: the Dean;
- 2.3.5 For issues involving domestic College staff, accommodation, services, or finance: the Bursar;
- 2.3.6 For complaints about one of the above College Officers, or complaints about several College Officers, functions or areas of work: the Principal (or the Chairman of the Governing Body if the complaint is about the Principal).

- 2.4 To resolve the complaint the relevant Officer will:
- 2.4.1 Seek to offer helpful and confidential advice and/or
 - 2.4.2 Try to find a remedy, or a reconciliation (in cases where relations have broken down between individuals, and the complainant does not object to this course);
 - 2.4.3 Note the withdrawal of a complaint where the complainant decides to do so;
 - 2.4.4 Adopt the formal procedure in cases where the informal procedure has not resolved a complainant's grievance and the complainant wishes to take the matter further.

3 Formal Procedure

It is not a condition of using this procedure that an informal approach must be exhausted before a formal approach is adopted. All formal complaints must be made in writing to the relevant College Officer as set out in 2.3 above. The stages in the formal procedure are as follows:

3.1 A formal complaint in writing to the appropriate College Officer (see 2.3 above)

- 3.1.1 A written complaint is submitted to the appropriate College Officer.
- 3.1.2 The Officer will give a copy of the written complaint to the subject of the complaint and invite them to respond. To this end they may also meet the Officer, accompanied by a colleague if they wish. Witnesses may be interviewed, and so become aware of the complaint and its nature, but all those involved will be expected to keep the matter confidential.
- 3.1.3 Having investigated the complaint, the relevant College Officer will set out in writing whether the complaint is upheld or not, giving reasons for the outcome of the investigation. Wherever possible a written report will be produced within fourteen days of the date of the written complaint. In more complex cases an initial response will be made within 14 days with a full response normally not less than 28 days later.

3.2 An appeal to the Principal, who will convene a panel

- 3.2.1 Where the College Officer is unable to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant the latter must give notice within seven working days of his/her dissatisfaction and also give the reasons why the grievance remains unresolved. The notice should be given in writing to the Principal.
- 3.2.2 The Principal will convene and chair an *ad hoc* Panel to consider the unresolved grievance. If the written complaint has been dealt with by the Principal, the Chairman of the Governing Body shall ask another Fellow of the College, not previously involved with the case to convene the panel, or if there is none, a member of Governing Body. The Panel will consist of the Principal and three others – including at least one full member of the SCR, and at least one member of Governing Body not employed by the college. All those chosen will be bound by requirements of confidentiality.
- 3.2.3 The procedure to be adopted by the Panel will be as follows:
- 3.2.3.1 The complainant will be invited to present their case to the Panel, either in writing or in person;
 - 3.2.3.2 If in person, the complainant may be accompanied by a colleague.

- 3.2.3.3 The subject of the complaint (or, in the case of a complaint regarding college policy, the relevant College Officer) will present their response; they may be accompanied by a colleague if they so decide;
- 3.2.3.4 Other witnesses may be called, if appropriate, as nominated by either party or by the Convenor of the Panel;
- 3.2.3.5 Both parties will withdraw whilst the Panel considers the representations from both sides, and the panel may adjourn in order to seek further information or to give further time for consideration;
- 3.2.3.6 The Panel will reach a decision and communicate its decision in writing to both parties normally within 72 hours of the end of the interviews. In the event that the panel decides that more time is needed for them to reach a decision, they will communicate this in writing also to both parties.

4 Record-Keeping and Monitoring Arrangements

4.1 When a complaint is *not* upheld a record will be kept for one year on the file of the person making the complaint.

4.2 Where a complaint *is* upheld, a record is kept on the file of the person against whom the complaint is made – for a period depending on the nature of the case and the outcome: for one year where no disciplinary action results or where there is disciplinary action and an informal warning follows; two years when a formal warning is given; indefinitely, in cases which are defined as bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination, etc.

4.3 In the event that disciplinary proceedings follow on from such a grievance investigation, a different person would need to head the disciplinary enquiry, but all the information/evidence gathered in the grievance procedure would be passed on so as to avoid duplication of time/effort.

4.4 In a small college the formal and public monitoring of complaints may cause difficulties of confidentiality. With this in mind, the Principal will keep a confidential note of the number of complaints made using the formal procedure in any academic year, and report to the Governing Body in Trinity Term each year under 'reserved business,' along with recommendations for any action required in response to the issues identified in complaints.

Governing Body, Trinity Term 2011