Regent's Park College

General Principles Concerning the Use of College Policies

Guidelines relating to College Polices on Complaints (by Students), Grievances (of staff), Harassment, Discipline, and Staff / Student Relationships

1. All college policies are to be read in conjunction with the Regents Park College Safeguarding Policy. Safeguarding referrals will be made within 24 hours where the nature of a case gives rise to concerns about the safeguarding or protection of an affected party, or where concerns about the 'suitability' of an individual to work in a position of trust arise. Matters that suggest potential criminality will be referred to the Police. Where affected parties require external support services, beyond the skill or resources of the University, external referrals will be made promptly.
2. How the policies relate to one another:
    a. Complaint by a student against member of staff:
        i. A complaint by a student against a member of staff will be investigated using the Student Complaints Policy.
        ii. Because of the imbalance of power between students and staff, the Harassment & Bullying Policy will be routinely consulted as part of this procedure.
        iii. If the complaint against the member of staff is upheld, the appropriate person will then decide whether the member of staff should face disciplinary action. This is a separate process and is set out in the Disciplinary Procedures in the Employee Handbook.
    b. Complaint by a student against another student:
        i. A complaint by a student against a student will normally be investigated using the Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Policy.
        ii. Harassment is listed as one of the matters covered by the Non-Academic Disciplinary Policy and the Harassment & Bullying Policy will be consulted as appropriate.
    c. Complaint by a member of staff against another member of staff:
        i. A complaint by a member of staff against a colleague will be investigated using the Grievance Policy.
        ii. Where the complaint is made by a more junior member of staff against a more senior colleague, the Harassment & Bullying Policy will be routinely consulted as part of this procedure.
        iii. If the Complaint against the member of staff is upheld, the appropriate person will then decide whether the member of staff should face disciplinary action. This is a separate process and is set out in the Disciplinary Procedures in the Employee Handbook.

3. If the complaint includes elements which might *prima facie* be considered to fall under the remit of the University's Sexual Violence Centre, it should be reviewed with this in mind by the Case Handler (CH) and Harassment Advisor (HA) and referred if necessary.
4. The college polices in question have processes which are very closely aligned.
5. On receipt of a disclosure or allegation against a student or a member of staff the CH should inform the Welfare Team so that support can be offered to both parties and their welfare needs assessed, signposting them to specialist help as necessary.
6. Both parties will be given a designated contact who will keep them up to date on the way in which the processes are progressing. Both parties should be informed regularly of this progress.
7. The CH and Welfare Team will discuss with the discloser the various processes available (informal or formal complaint) – not to lead them into formal processes they do not wish to enter, but to make clear to them how the matter might be dealt with.
8. The discloser should be told that while they may or may not wish to make a formal complaint, the CH may still have to act upon the information received (i.e. that there may still be an investigation and / or disciplinary action against the student or member of staff whether or not a formal complaint is made).
9. Making a complaint, and being the subject of complaint, can be extremely stressful. Both parties should be notified of support available to them by their designated contact**.** In the case of the staff member, given the small size of the College, and the need to keep people free for panels etc, it is likely that support from someone outside of College will be required – with a possible resource implication.
10. On receiving a disclosure or formal complaint the Case Handler should explain next steps to the discloser and also explain what any College process can and cannot achieve.
    a. College processes are not criminal courts, and if the discloser believes a criminal offence may have been committed they will be offered support in reporting the matter to the police.
    b. The discloser should be told what the possible outcomes are, and what they will and will not be told in relation to those outcomes.
11. The need for confidentiality should be explained, and why it also serves the discloser's own interests as well as protecting the legal rights of others.
12. The likely timeline for the process and its various stages, insofar as it can be known, should be explained to both parties. It should also be explained that the process will not be delayed indefinitely on health grounds and that it is in everyone's interests to conclude the process in a timely way.
13. In considering any complaint or allegation, rumours or unattributed remarks or narratives will not be considered as part of the evidence to be presented.
14. Where the staff member is an ordained person they should be made aware at the outset that the complaint will result in a College process and that their denomination may also require a process. The CH should indicate that while the College's *final* outcome may be affected by a

denominational decision, the College process will proceed independently of any denominational process and not wait upon it.

15. At the end of complaints, appeals, or internal procedures covered by the College policies, a Completion of Procedures letter will normally be sent to the person who is the subject of an internal procedure, and (if appropriate) to the person who has made the complaint.

Guidelines for Case Handlers Using these Policies

1. Case Handlers should read the General Principles document and all relevant polices carefully.
2. The CH will need to decide whether the disclosure has operational consequences (e.g. suspension) and if so inform the member of staff's line manager or the appropriate senior staff member so that they can make necessary changes to staff cover.
3. Throughout the process the CH should take advice from two sources:
    a. on process, from the HR Manager;
    b. on wording of letters etc and outstanding legal matters, from the College solicitors, who should also be notified at the start that a complaint has been made and that HR advice is being followed.
4. Where the student is a ministerial student the CH should identify a designated contact to liaise with their placement church (sharing whatever it is appropriate to share). If the Director of Ministerial Training is not that person, they should also be told so that any impact upon the placement experience can be considered.
5. The CH should ensure that those asked to serve on a panel during the process have adequate time to absorb the materials, and access to appropriate advice on criteria relating to decisions required.
6. The CH should consider whether it is necessary to draw up, with the Director of Development and Alumni Relations, a statement which can be used for press and / or alumni enquiries in the event of the complaint receiving publicity.