



Public Complaints Procedure

Introduction

1. Spurgeon's College aims to provide a high standard and quality in the delivery of its services and facilities but recognises that occasionally things can go wrong. When they do, every reasonable effort will be made to deal promptly with all complaints, to investigate them thoroughly, and to seek to resolve them satisfactorily.
2. The College respects the rights of both the complainant and the person complained against. All parties shall be treated with dignity and respect in the application of this Policy and no one should suffer any reprisals for making a complaint in good faith. Where a complaint is shown to be frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice, it will be dismissed.
3. All complaints will be dealt with in confidence as far as possible, excepting the need to make enquiries with others to investigate the complaint. An individual against whom a complaint is made has the right to be supplied with a copy of the complaint and to comment on it.
4. Anonymous complaints may be investigated but it will be at the discretion of the Director of Operations to determine how, if at all, an anonymous complaint is addressed.

Purpose

5. This procedure is to enable staff to deal with complaints from the public or relevant third parties external to the College.

Scope

6. This procedure is for the use of the **public or third parties external to the College only**. It is not intended for use by staff or students. Students and staff should use one of the following mechanisms, as relevant:
 - ***Academic Verification and Appeals Procedure*** (academic complaints or appeals)
 - ***Academic Malpractice Policy*** (complaints or appeals regarding academic malpractice decisions)
 - ***Admissions Protocol*** (for appeals against admission decisions)

- ***Disciplinary Procedures for Students*** (complaints by students of intimidation, harassment, bullying and discrimination by other students; Complaints about student behaviour which may be a breach of the College disciplinary regulations)
- ***Grievance and Complaints Procedures for the Student Body*** (complaints by students of intimidation, harassment, bullying and discrimination by the College or its staff; or general complaints)
- ***Grievance Procedure for Staff*** (for employment related complaints and grievances made by staff)
- ***Dignity and Respect at Work: Harassment and Bullying Policy*** (complaints by staff of intimidation, harassment, bullying and discrimination)
- ***Data Protection Policy*** (complaints relating to the application of the Data Protection Policy)
- ***Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy*** (staff disclosing confidential information relating to some danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct connected with the workplace, be it of the College as an employer or a fellow employees)

Procedure

7. All formal complaints must be made in writing.

Informal resolution

8. The College believes that it is in everyone's interests to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, and as close to the source of the problem as possible.
9. It is anticipated that most concerns can be resolved informally. In the first instance, where possible, concerns should be raised with the member of staff with whom the third party has had contact. They will deal with the matter immediately where they can. If an immediate resolution is not possible an explanation will be given as to what action will be taken next.

Making a formal complaint

10. To log a formal complaint a complainant must have:
 - a) Attempted to resolve the issue through approaching the person(s) directly responsible for the area of concern, and have good reason to consider that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved.
 - b) Completed the Public Complaints Form (Appendix A) and submitted this within **3 months** of the last incident relating to the problem occurring (unless special circumstances can be claimed) setting out the grounds of the complaint and desired outcomes.

11. An 'Events and Enquiries Privacy Notice' will also be sent with the form, or when acknowledging any written complaint.

Investigating a formal complaint

12. The Director of Operations will investigate the complaint.
13. Normally these will be acknowledged within five working days and answered as soon as possible thereafter. A formal written response will normally be sent within 20 working days.
14. The College will endeavour to adhere to the indicative timescales outlined within the procedure wherever possible. Should it not be possible to adhere to these timescales, all parties to the complaint will be advised accordingly
15. Written complaints (not on a form) which are received with enough information to investigate should be treated in the same manner as complaints received on the prescribed form, and should be passed to the Director of Operations.
16. If the complaint concerns a department head then the complaint should be passed to the Principal (or nominee) for investigation. Complaints regarding the Principal will be investigated by the Chair of Governors or their nominee.
17. The investigator appointed:
 - May organise conciliation through joint or individual meetings.
 - Can decide on actions needed to bring the complaint to a satisfactory conclusion, and make arrangements for these to be undertaken (where appropriate without meeting the parties directly involved).

Possible outcomes following the Public Complaints Procedure

18. Once a formal complaint has been submitted and considered through the Public Complaints Procedure, the possible outcomes are:
 - A mutually acceptable outcome is reached, and the Director of Operations notifies the complainant in writing of their conclusions, and any consequent action proposed.
 - A mutually acceptable outcome is not reached, but the Director of Operations considers that the complaint has been heard fairly, and that appropriate actions have been taken.
 - The complaint is rejected as being without grounds or foundation.
19. The complainant should be advised in writing of the result of the investigation, any actions or resolutions that have been undertaken, and their right of appeal as below.
20. If the complainant believes the issues raised within their complaint have not been adequately addressed and wishes to pursue the complaint further, they

must indicate in writing that they wish the complaint to be reviewed. The Principal will review the case along with two governors. Where the Principal has previously been involved, or is the subject of the complaint, the complaint will be reviewed by a panel of three governors chaired by the Chair of Governors or their nominee.

21. Any decision following review is final.

Recording, Reporting and Organisational Learning

22. The Director of Operations will record public complaints in sufficient detail for analysis and management reporting to allow the causes of complaints to be identified, addressed and, where appropriate, for training opportunities and improvements to be introduced.
23. The College will keep and dispose of records relating to public complaints in accordance with its Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.

Document control box			
Title	Public Complaints Procedure		
Date approved	11 February 2019	Implementation date	Feb 2019
Next review date	TBC		
Version	1	Supersedes version	n/a
Approving body	Governors		
Quality Code consulted			
Member of staff responsible	Director of Operations		

Appendix A: Public Complaints Form

Spurgeon's College aims to provide a high standard and quality of service in the delivery of its services and facilities but recognises that occasionally things can go wrong. When they do, every reasonable effort will be made to deal promptly with all complaints, to investigate them thoroughly, and to seek to resolve them satisfactorily

To log a formal complaint you must have:

1. Attempted to resolve the issue through approaching the person(s) directly responsible for the area of concern, and have good reason to consider that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved.
2. Completed and submitted this form within **3 months** of the last incident relating to the problem occurring (unless special circumstances can be claimed).

Receipt of a formal complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 working days and answered as soon as possible thereafter. A formal written response will normally be sent within 20 working days. The College will endeavour to adhere to these timescales wherever possible, but if not will advise you accordingly.

Please send the completed form to: h.stokley@spurgeons.ac.uk

Rev Helen Stokley, Director of Operations, Spurgeon's College, South Norwood Hill, London, SE25 6DJ

Full Name: (please use block capitals if completing by hand)	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Contact number:	Email:
Have you attempted to resolve your concern with the College informally? YES / NO	
If yes, who have you previously spoken to about your complaint?	
When was this? (Date/s)	

What is your complaint about?

If you have raised the complaint informally then what was the outcome of this?

What would you like us to do to resolve your complaint?

Signed:

Date: