



Complaints Policy

Approved by Governors – February 2025
Effective from April 2025

Joint Principals | January 2025

Minsthorpe Community College: A place where everyone plays a part in strengthening our learning community through **Motivation, Commitment & Care.**



Minsthorpe
Community College

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Section 1

Introduction

Valuing and responding to parents or carers

Minsthorpe Community College takes concerns and complaints seriously, recognises their value in school improvement and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. The Complaints procedure for Minsthorpe Community College follows a four-stage process which deserve due consideration and further investigation.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure applies to parents or carers of children that are registered at Minsthorpe Community College. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures, we will use this complaints policy. Please see the table below entitled Scope of this Complaints Policy for further detail. Should other interested parties (e.g. members of the public or parents of former students) wish to make a complaint to Minsthorpe Community College then they should also refer to Section 4 of this document.

Terminology

In this procedure:

- 'concern' means 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought;
- 'complaint' means 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action;
- 'meeting' and 'hearing' means an in person or virtual meeting or hearing (i.e. telephone or video conference where all parties can participate verbally), virtual meetings/ hearings will only be held if all parties have access to appropriate equipment to attend and are happy to do so;
- 'parent' means a biological parent, carer or anyone who has parental responsibility or care for a child;
- 'school days' excludes weekends and academy holidays and periods of partial or total closure.

Timeframes

To resolve concerns swiftly and avoid unnecessary escalation we encourage parents to raise these informally with the College in the first instance at Stage 1. We value effective communication and seek to build and maintain positive relationships with all parents and carers.

Complaints must be raised within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will only consider complaints made outside of this time frame, or previous complaints that have been resolved, under exceptional circumstances.

If it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines set out within this procedure, you will be advised accordingly and given an explanation as to why this has been the case and provided with revised timetables.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority safeguarding teams or tribunals/courts, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If a complainant commences legal action against Minsthorpe Community College in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Where a complaint is raised but we do not have clarity on the issues and/or desired outcomes, we will inform you of the information we need to progress the complaint and pause this procedure until reasonable clarity is achieved.

How to raise a concern or complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. We request that any formal complaint (Stage 2, 3 or 4) be made in writing. For ease of use, template concern/complaint forms are included at the end of this policy. A concern or complaint may also be made by a third party acting on your behalf, as long as you provide the College with appropriate written consent for the third party to do so. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the most relevant person to resolve their concerns at Stage 1. Staff will signpost your concern to the relevant person if necessary.

A list of Key Staff can be found on the College website here [Minsthorpe Community College - Key Staff](#)

Key Contacts

Concern	Who to contact
Attendance matters	Attendance Team
Pastoral matters, for example regarding student behaviour and sanctions (with the exception of suspensions. Please refer to the suspension letter).	Relevant Head of Year
SEND matters	Student Support Team
Curricular matters	Relevant Curriculum Team Leader
Matters involving two or more of the above	Relevant Head of Year

The College telephone number is 01977 657600 or concerns / complaints can be emailed to enquiries@minsthorpe.cc

Complaints against school staff (except the Principals) should be made in the first instance, to the Principal via enquiries@minsthorpe.cc. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. Please refer to the Scope of this Complaints Policy below for further details.

Complaints that involve or are about one or both of the Principals should be addressed to Mrs B Semper (the Chair of Governors), via enquiries@minsthorpe.cc. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to Miss E Sykes (the Clerk to the Governing Body) via enquiries@minsthorpe.cc. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

The College is committed to resolving the complaint as quickly and effectively as possible. Therefore, it will help if you can:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible;
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- ask for assistance as needed;
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect;
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint e.g. on social media and respect confidentiality;
- allow the College to resolve the specific complaint without the addition of historical or new concerns.

For ease of use and to ensure all relevant information is provided, template concern and complaint forms are included in Section 6, which you are encouraged to use. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the College. You can also ask a third-party organisation, for example Citizens Advice, to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable you to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assistance in completing the complaint form or holding meetings in accessible locations.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases the College will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the College will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Principals or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether there are exceptional circumstances to justify conducting an investigation into the issues raised.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Policy

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Minsthorpe Community College, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below:

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the local authority Schools and education - Wakefield Council</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the College's Designated Safeguarding Team or the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding, or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0345 8503 503</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the College's complaints procedure download.asp</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the college's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the college's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the college's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use College premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Curriculum - content 	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus</p>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the Police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Minsthorpe Community College in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Minsthorpe Community College wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is resolved in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made;
- an undertaking to review any relevant college policies in light of the complaint;
- an apology from the College.

Records of complaints

A record will be kept of all written formal complaints, including at what stage they were resolved and action taken by us as a result of those complaints regardless of whether they were upheld. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where:

- access is requested by the Secretary of State;
- disclosure is required in the course of an academy inspection;
- an individual has a legal right to access their own personal data contained within such documentation; or
- under other legal authority.

We will make the findings and recommendations of the Committee available for inspection on the College premises by the Trust and the Principals.

Your right to withdraw a complaint

If you want to withdraw a complaint, we will ask you to confirm this in writing, unless the time specified for you to respond to the complaint outcome at Stage 2, 3 or 4 has lapsed.

Section 3

Resolving Complaints

The College intends to resolve concerns / complaints at each stage without further escalation to the next stage.

Stage 1 – Informal Concern – Appropriate Staff Member

The complaints procedure for Minsthorpe Community College follows a four-stage process. The underlying principle is that concerns will be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. Details of your concern, including what your desired outcome is, will be passed to the relevant member of staff who will make contact with you, investigate and try to resolve the concern within 15 school days. The Stage 1 informal concern / complaint form in Section 6 provides a useful format for you.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 then you may choose to proceed to the formal second stage below. You must confirm within 10 school days if you wish to progress the complaint to the next stage. If there is no further communication from you regarding the concern after 10 school days, it will be considered resolved and the complaint closed.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint – Leadership Team plus one other

If you choose to escalate a complaint further, you will be asked to put it in writing, explaining why you are not satisfied, indicating the matters that you consider unresolved at Stage 1 and what your desired outcome is. The Stage 2 complaint form in Section 6 provides a useful format for your written complaint.

You will be invited to attend a Stage 2 meeting with a member of the Leadership Team plus a colleague (who may have tried to resolve your complaint informally), in order to discuss the details of the complaint further and ensure that the details required on the formal complaint form have been provided in full. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by one other person, such as a friend, relative or interpreter, to assist you. Where possible, this meeting will take place within 15 school days of receipt of the written Stage 2 complaint.

Electronic recordings of the Stage 2 meeting or conversations are not normally permitted and, in any event, would require the consent of all those present. Minutes of the meeting will be taken and will be made available upon request.

If necessary, witnesses will be interviewed and statements taken from those involved. If the complaint centres on a student, the student will usually be interviewed. If the matter includes a complaint relating to a member of staff, the member of staff will have the opportunity to respond to the complaint.

The resolution of the complaint may be decided at the meeting and agreed verbally between the parties, in which case it will be confirmed in writing to the parents/carers by the person who convenes the meeting. Alternatively, or if a resolution is not agreed at the meeting, an investigation of all matters relating to the complaint will be carried out and you will be informed in writing of

the outcome and what action has been taken or is proposed within 15 school days of receipt of the written Stage 2 complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at this stage then you may choose to proceed to Stage 3 below. You must confirm within 10 school days if you wish to progress the complaint to the next stage. If there is no further communication regarding the complaint after 10 school days, the complaint will be considered resolved and the complaint closed. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The College may engage an independent, external person to carry out the investigation into the Stage 2 complaint or to review the investigation and response at Stage 2. This may be appropriate where the complaint is particularly complex or involves legal issues.

Stage 3 – Formal Complaint – Joint Principal(s)

If you choose to escalate a complaint further, you will be asked to put it in writing, explaining why you are not satisfied, indicating the matters that you consider unresolved at Stage 2 and what your desired outcome is. The Stage 3 complaint form in Section 6 provides the format for your written complaint.

A Stage 3 meeting will be convened with both Joint Principals (or one Principal plus a member of the Leadership Team), in order to discuss the details further and the actions taken to date to resolve the complaint. We will aim to hold this meeting within 15 school days of receipt of your written complaint following escalation. Minutes will be taken and made available upon request. Electronic recordings of the Stage 3 meeting or conversations are not normally permitted and, in any event, would require the consent of all those present.

The resolution of the complaint may be decided at the meeting and agreed verbally between the parties, in which case it will be confirmed in writing to you by the person who convenes the meeting. Alternatively, or if a resolution is not agreed at the meeting, an investigation of all matters relating to the complaint will be carried out and we will aim to inform you in writing, of the outcome and what action has been taken or is proposed within 15 school days of receipt of the written Stage 3 complaint following escalation.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at this stage then you may choose to proceed to the fourth stage below. You must confirm within 10 school days if you wish to progress the complaint to the next stage. If there is no further communication regarding the complaint after 10 school days, the complaint will be considered resolved and closed. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

Stage 4 – Formal Complaint – Governors’ Complaints Committee

If you choose to escalate a complaint further, you will be asked to reconfirm this by writing to the Clerk to the Governors at the College, explaining why you are not satisfied, indicating the matters that you consider remain unresolved and what the desired outcome is. By fully completing the Stage 4 complaint form you will ensure all required details are provided.

The Clerk to the Governors will convene a Governors' Complaints Committee ('Committee'). The Committee will consist of at least two governors and one panel member who is independent of the running of the College, all with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Committee. If there are fewer than three panel members available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through the LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, the Clerk may convene an entirely independent Committee to respond to the complaint at Stage 4.

The Committee will principally consider how the complaint was handled at the previous stages but has the discretion to review other aspects of the complaint as it sees fit. The Committee will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

At least five school days before the meeting, the Clerk will confirm and notify you of the date, time and venue of the meeting, using best efforts to ensure that the dates are mutually convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible. If you reject the offer of three proposed dates and times, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in your absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

You have the right to be accompanied to the hearing by a friend, relative or interpreter but you must inform the Clerk to the Governors who you intend to invite in advance of the meeting. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend. One of the Joint Principals and/or a Leadership Team representative will be invited to attend. The meeting will be conducted formally and details of the procedure to be followed will be circulated to all parties with the invitation.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

please send your complaint to the Clerk who will arrange for a Stage 4 to be heard by an independent investigator/ a committee of independent governors appointed by the Trust. At the conclusion of their investigation, a formal written response will be provided.

Any documents relevant to the previous three stages of the complaint will be circulated to all parties at least three school days before the date of the meeting. The Committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded. The meeting will be held in private. Minutes will be taken and made available upon request. Electronic recordings of the Stage 4 meeting or conversations are not normally permitted, and in any event, would require the consent of all those present.

The aim of the Committee will be:

- reconciliation;
- to put right things that may have gone wrong.

The Committee will:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the Committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the College's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues happening again.

The Chair of the Committee will aim to provide you and College with a full written explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, within 25 school days of receipt of the written Stage 4 complaint. If this timescale is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep you informed.

Stage 5 – Department for Education

There is no further right of appeal following Stage 4. However, if the complainant believes the College did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 4.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Minsthorpe Community College. They will consider whether Minsthorpe Community College has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Store Street
Manchester, M1 2WD

The role of the Clerk

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the Committee, and should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;
- liaise with staff, Principals and Chair of Governors (as applicable) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure;
- be mindful of the timescales to respond to complaints;
- ensure that all people involved in the complaints process are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR);
- ensure that the Committee has access to legal advice, where appropriate;
- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, taking reasonable steps to find a date that is convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example: stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing within an agreed timescale;
- minute the hearing;
- notify all parties of the Committee's decision;
- assist the College in issuing a summary letter to the complainant.

The role of the Joint Principal(s) (or other party investigating as applicable in accordance with the procedure) at Stage 3

- to ensure that the complainant is fully updated throughout the Stage 3 procedure;
- to ensure that the correct procedure has been followed;
- to ensure that an investigation is carried out, and a report compiled;
- to meet the complainant, if appropriate;
- if the complaint is being referred to Stage 4, notify the Clerk to arrange the Committee.

The role of the Chair of the Committee

The Chair of the Committee has a key role, ensuring that:

- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy;
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease;
- the remit of the Committee is explained to the complainant;
- the written material is seen by everyone in attendance (provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR);
- key findings of fact are made, and that any issues not previously mentioned in writing should not be raised at the hearing and, if they are mentioned at the hearing, these should not be noted or considered by the Committee;
- both the complainant and the College/trust are given the opportunity to make their case, and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the hearing, or verbally in the hearing itself;
- the Committee is open-minded, acts independently and no committee member has an external interest in the outcome or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- minutes of the meeting are taken.

Section 4

Procedures for handling complaints from other interested parties.

This section refers specifically to interested parties wishing to raise a concern with the College, who are not the parents / carers of student(s) currently on-roll. This may include members of the public or parents of former students, but this list is not exhaustive. Section 1 details the Scope of this Complaints Policy and Procedure which also applies to other interested parties.

The Procedures for Other Interested Parties follows a three-stage process which deserve due consideration and further investigation. The College will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. On rare occasions when the College has to deviate from the published timescales this will be communicated to you and we appreciate your patience in allowing us to respond and resolve the matter.

The College telephone number is 01977 657600 or concerns can be emailed to enquiries@minsthorpe.cc

The College is committed to resolving the complaint as quickly and effectively as possible. Therefore, it will help of the complainant can:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible;
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- ask for assistance as needed;
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect;
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint e.g. on social media and respect confidentiality;
- allow the College to resolve the specific complaint without the addition of historical or new concerns.

How to raise a concern or complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. Complainants should contact the College and detail the nature of the concerns and the desired resolution. This will be handled at Stage 1 (informally) by an appropriate member of the College, who will contact you either by telephone or email. The Stage 1 concern form in Section 6 provides a useful format for you. Please state clearly your relationship with the College (e.g. local resident, ex-parent etc). You will be informed in writing of the outcome and what action has been taken or is proposed, within 15 school days of receipt of your complaint. If a longer period is required, you will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at this stage then you may choose to proceed to the formal Stage 2 below. You must confirm within 10 school days if you wish to progress the complaint to the next stage. If there is no further communication from you regarding the concern after 10 school days, it will be considered resolved and the complaint closed. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

Stage 2 – Formal Stage

If you choose to escalate a complaint further, you will be asked to put it in writing, explaining why you are not satisfied, indicating the matters that you consider unresolved at Stage 1 and what your desired outcome is. The Stage 2 complaint form for other interested parties in Section 6 provides a useful format for your written complaint. This will be handled at Stage 2 (formally) by a member of the Leadership Team, who will contact you either by telephone or email. A mutually convenient meeting at the College may be arranged if deemed appropriate. You will be informed in writing of the outcome and what action has been taken or is proposed (if appropriate) within 15 school days of receipt of your complaint, although a longer period is required to respond, you will be kept updated.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at this stage then you may choose to proceed to the third and final stage (formal) below.

You must confirm within 10 school days if you wish to progress the complaint to the next stage. If there is no further communication from you regarding the concern after 10 school days, it will be considered resolved and the complaint closed. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

Stage 3 - Governors' Complaints Committee.

If you choose to escalate a complaint further, you will be asked to reconfirm this by writing to the Clerk to the Governors at the College, explaining why you are not satisfied, indicating the matters that you consider remain unresolved and what the desired outcome is. You may be asked by the Clerk to the Governors to also complete the formal complaint form found in Section 6 to ensure all required details are provided.

The Clerk will convene a Governors' Complaints Committee ('Committee'). The Committee will consist of at least two governors and one panel member who is independent of the running of the College, all with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Committee. If there are fewer than three panel members available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through their LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, the Clerk may convene an entirely independent committee to respond to the complaint at Stage 3. The Committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations.

If you are invited to a meeting, you have a right to be accompanied by a friend, relative or interpreter but you must inform the Clerk who you intend to invite in advance of the meeting. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend. One of the Joint Principals or their representative will be invited to also attend. The meeting will be conducted formally and details of the procedure to be followed will be circulated to all parties with the invitation.

At least five school days before the meeting, the Clerk will confirm and notify you of the date, time and venue of the meeting. If a meeting is offered reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the date is convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.

Any documents relevant to the previous two stages of the complaint will be circulated to all parties at least three school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The Committee will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Minutes will be taken and made available upon request. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted and, in any event, would require the consent of all those present.

The aim of the Committee will be:

- reconciliation;
- to put right things that may have gone wrong.

The Committee will:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the Committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the College's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues happening again.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Minsthorpe Community College with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 25 school days of receipt of the written Stage 3 complaint. If a longer period is required, you will be kept informed of the progress and provided with a new expected date for a response.

Stage 4

There is no further right of appeal following Stage 3 for other interested parties. However, if the complainant believes the College did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 3.

www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Telephone 0370 000 2288
Department for Education
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Section 5

Repetitious, vexatious and unreasonable complaints and complaint campaigns

There are rare circumstances where we will deviate from the Complaints Procedure set out in the sections above. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

Repetitious, including serial and/or persistent, complaints

Where the complainant's complaint is the same, similar to or based on the same facts of a complaint which has already been considered in full and we have:

- taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns; and
- given the complainant a clear statement of our position and their options, we will write to the complainant to advise that the complaints procedure has been exhausted and that we will not be responding to any further correspondence in relation to these matters. The complainant will be referred to Stage 5 of Section 3 and Stage 4 of Section 4 (as applicable).

Vexatious complaints

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as:

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific or repetitious;
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- refusal to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refusal to co-operate with the complaints investigation process;
- refusal to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;
- insistence on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introducing trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on;
- raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- seeking an unrealistic outcome, such as the inappropriate dismissal of staff;
- making excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with;
- knowingly providing falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complaints pursued in an otherwise unreasonable manner

Where the complainant's behaviour or language towards staff, governors/trustees or members is aggressive, abusive, offensive, discriminatory or threatening or insulting personal comments are made about, or threats are made towards, staff.

In the circumstances outlined in (2) and (3) above, we may:

- inform the complainant that we consider their complaint to be vexatious or the manner in which they are pursuing their complaint to be unreasonable and why, and ask them to desist;
- conduct the Committee on the papers only i.e. not hold a hearing;
- refuse to consider the complaint any further and refer the complainant directly to Stage 5 of Section 3 or Stage 4 of Section 4 (as applicable).

We may also restrict the complainant's access to the College, e.g. requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only), requiring contact to take place with a named person only, restricting telephone calls to specified days and times or number of contacts or banning the complainant from the College's premises.

Where the complainant's behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, governors/trustees or members we will consider other options - for example, reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

Complaint campaigns

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint campaign is defined as a complaint from three or more separate individuals (whether or not connected with the College) which are all based on the same subject.

Depending on the subject in question, we may deviate from the procedure set out in this policy and instead:

- send a template response to all complainants; and/or
- publish a single response on the College's website (as applicable).

Section 6

Appendices

STAGE 1 CONCERN / COMPLAINT FORM

Please use this form to log a concern / complaint at Stage 1.

Please bullet point where possible what the complaint is regarding and the actions necessary to address the issues raised.

1.	Name:	Date of incident:
2.	Student Name & P&A: Or Relationship with College:	
3.	Please describe the nature of the complaint, what do you wish to complain about include relevant dates etc (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary): - -	
4.	Please indicate what action you wish to see taken to address your complaint, what do you feel would be an acceptable resolution to your complaint: - -	
5.	Date complaint submitted	
6.	Contact Address (please note that this is the address the College should use whilst consideration of your complaint is ongoing): Telephone No: Email:	

Please submit this form to Mrs Y Kelsall, Administration Team Leader, Minsthorpe Community College, Minsthorpe Lane, South Elmsall, WF9 2UJ. Email: enquiries@minsthorpe.cc

STAGE 2 COMPLAINT FORM

Please use this form if you wish to submit a complaint to the College at Stage 2. Alternatively, please contact the college on 01977 657600. Please ensure you have read the College's complaints procedure which is available on the website www.minsthorpe.cc

1.	Name:	Date of incident:
2.	Student Name & P&A: Or Relationship with College:	
3.	Has this complaint been raised previously:	Yes / No
4.	If YES please detail the steps taken and with who:	
3.	Please describe the nature of your complaint, what do you wish to complain about include relevant dates etc (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary): - -	
4.	Please indicate what action you wish to see taken to address your complaint, what do you feel would be an acceptable resolution to your complaint: - -	
5.	Contact Address (please note that this is the address the College should use whilst consideration of your complaint is ongoing): Telephone No: Email:	

I confirm that I have read and followed the Complaints Procedure and this complaint is submitted after Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure has been completed.

Signed:	Date:
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Please submit this form to Mrs Y Kelsall, Administration Team Leader, Minsthorpe Community College, Minsthorpe Lane, South Elmsall, WF9 2UJ. Email: enquiries@minsthorpe.cc

5.	Please set out what action you have taken to date to resolve your complaint and attach copies of any relevant correspondence:
6.	Please explain why you are not satisfied with the response you received at Stage 1 and 2 <u>and clearly indicate the matters that you consider remain unresolved:</u>
7.	Please indicate what action you wish to see taken to address your complaint, what do you feel would be an acceptable resolution to your complaint:

I confirm that I have read and followed the Complaints Procedure and this complaint is submitted after Stage 1 and 2 of the Complaints Procedure has been completed.

Signed:	Date:
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Please submit this form to Mrs Y Kelsall, Administration Team Leader, Minsthorpe Community College, Minsthorpe Lane, South Elmsall, WF9 2UJ. Email: enquiries@minsthorpe.cc

5.	Please set out what action you have taken to date to resolve your Stage 3 complaint and attach copies of any relevant correspondence:
6.	Please explain why you are not satisfied with the response you received at Stage 3 <u>and clearly indicate the matters that you consider remain unresolved:</u>
7.	Please indicate what action you wish to see taken to address your complaint, what do you feel would be an acceptable resolution to your complaint:

I confirm that I have read and followed the Complaints Procedure and this complaint is submitted after Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure has been completed.

Signed:	Date:
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Please submit this form to Miss E Sykes, Clerk to the Governing Body, Minsthorpe Community College, Minsthorpe Lane, South Elmsall, WF9 2UJ. Email: enquiries@minsthorpe.cc

Final Section

Equality Assessment

This policy has been assessed with regard to its impact on equalities issue, with specific reference to the aims of the Equality Act 2010. The equality impact assessment focused on race, gender, disability, pregnancy and maternity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion/belief.

Policy Review Schedule

Policy last reviewed:	Due for next review:	Role Responsible:
August 11	Summer 16	Principals' PA/Admin Team Leader
June 2016	June 2019	Principals' PA/Admin Team Leader
February 2019	February 2022	Principals' PA/Admin Team Leader
February 2022	February 2025	Assistant Principal – Quality & Impact / Admin Team Leader Approved by Brown Jacobson law firm
February 2025	February 2026	College Complaints Review Group