

## Earlscliffe (Sussex Summer Schools Ltd)

### CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**This policy is applicable to all students/parents in the college**

Our aim is to resolve concerns at the earliest possible opportunity. We see our close links and direct communication as a distinctive strength. Most concerns are resolved informally but the procedure clarifies the referral system and ensures that concerns are dealt with quickly and objectively. Staff are positively encouraged to resolve concerns at their level whilst keeping a record for future reference and ensuring that senior staff are kept informed and updated. You are welcome to speak to the Deputy Head at any stage.

If your concern is not resolved by the Deputy Head or you are unhappy with the decision you have a right of appeal to the Head Teacher. The concern then becomes a Formal Complaint.

#### **Concerns**

A concern may be about any aspect of college life e.g. homework, marking and assessment, teaching in a lesson, behaviour, support and guidance, safety.

**Stage 1:** Contact the staff member on an informal basis. Explain your concern and ask for an explanation. The staff member will respond within 24 hours but they may not have an answer initially, but they will indicate a time scale. If they cannot resolve the problem progress to stage 2.

**Stage 2** The staff member's line manager e.g. Deputy Head, Head of Pastoral Care, depending on the issue, will investigate and report back. The concern and answer will be recorded in writing and filed and a copy will be sent to the Head Teacher. The Line Manager will respond within 72 hours. A parent may make a complaint in writing at this stage (or earlier) if they wish, which will be considered by member of the SLT who will investigate and respond as above (in Stage 2 para).

**Stage 3** If the matter is unable to be resolved at this stage it will be referred to the Head Teacher who will investigate and answer the concern directly within 48 hours. The vast majority of concerns will finally be resolved at this stage.

**Stage 4: Formal Complaint.** If you are unhappy with the Head Teacher's decision or the concern is not resolved you have the right of appeal to the Director of Colleges. The Director will make provision for a hearing, within 7 working days, before a panel consisting of at least three people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of the panel is independent of the management and running of the school. Parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied if they wish. The panel will make finding and recommendations and ensure the complainant, Director and where relevant the person complained about is given a copy of them. This will be within 5 days of the meeting.

All complaints will be confidential and written records will be kept of whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

Although replies to complaints will be prompt there may be a delay in the outcome while the complaint is investigated and information gathered.

### **Concerns about Fees**

The procedure is as follows

Contact the college and register your concern with Helen Simmonds, [helensimmonds@earlscliffe.co.uk](mailto:helensimmonds@earlscliffe.co.uk), who will respond within 5 working days. Most complaints will be resolved at this level. If you are not satisfied with the outcome you should contact James Harding, [jamesharding@earlscliffe.co.uk](mailto:jamesharding@earlscliffe.co.uk).

### **Important**

All complaints will be collated; written records kept and will be confidential.

In general all complaints will be acknowledged within 72 hours and a resolution sought within a week.

Although replies to concerns/complaints will be prompt there may be a delay in the outcome while the complaint is investigated and information gathered. We aim to resolve all matters within 30 working days.

All records of complaint are reviewed regularly by the SLT.

In general a record of the complaint will be kept for three years.

Parents may contact Ofsted for advice re complaints.

If your complaint is sensitive in nature or particularly confidential, do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Head or Head Teacher directly.

Students will not be penalised for making a complaint in good faith.

All complaints will be resolved with an outcome that balances the rights and duties of the students.

Remember that we are working in partnership and we never forget that your child's interests and welfare are paramount; that is the guiding principle behind our Complaints Procedure. We place a very high premium on your trust and confidence.