COMPLIMENTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY 2026-2027

Overall responsibility:	Deputy Principal
Implementation:	Assistant Principal for Teaching, Learning and Quality
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Endorsed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team

Date July 2026

Jason Lancaster

Principal and CEO



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1. INTRODUCTION

The College welcomes compliments, concerns and complaints from all members of the College community and from the general public. It will use this process to improve its service to its students and the wider communities in which it exists.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

Deputy Principal / Assistant Principal of Quality, Teaching & Learning

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and visitors to the College, including contractors working on the College site.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Northampton College seeks to continuously improve the services it offers and welcomes feedback which may, from time to time, include dissatisfaction with aspects of its services, and focuses on resolving complaints quickly through an informal approach where practicable. The outcome from such complaints is utilised to support the improvement of the College..

It is also recognised that there are many instances where we deliver exceptional service and compliments are welcome. Good practice will be shared across the College teams.

It is the College policy that all formal complaints made against the College or the services it offers should be:

- Managed by the Quality Team.
- Treated seriously and in an open manner as set out in this policy.
- Resolved, informally or formally, at the earliest opportunity wherever possible.
- Acknowledged within two teaching days in writing.
- Investigated by an appropriate manager.
- Resolved, wherever it is reasonably practicable, within three teaching weeks. This may be extended if a complaint is particularly complex or is being investigated across a non-term time period; the complainant will be kept informed if this is the case.
- Provide feedback to complainants.
- Used as feedback to improve the serve which the College offers.

The complainant will be expected to:

- Explain the problem clearly and fully, including any action taken to date.
- Raise their complaint as soon as possible and within 3 months following the original event, action or issue. Complaints from students no longer attending the College must be made within 3 months of their recorded last day at College.
- Allow the College reasonable time to deal with the matter.
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the control of the College.
- Recognise that complaints relating to students and staff may be dealt with under other College processes/procedures and are therefore out of the scope of this policy. The outcomes of these will remain confidential.

- Respect that our staff have the right to work in a pleasant and safe environment and the College will not tolerate aggressive, abusive, violent behaviour, bad language, racist, sexist or any discriminatory comments and reserve the right to close matters if this should occur.

5. KEY PRINCIPLES

- The College expects that every effort will be made to resolve the issue locally and informally through discussion and agreed actions in the first instance. Where this is not possible or does not result in satisfactory resolution the complaint should be submitted to the Quality Office.
- The College usually expects complaints to be made by the person concerned. However, it will consider complaints made by a student's parent or advocate. To comply with the Data Protection Act permission will be sought if the complainant is over 18 at the start of the academic year.
- Compliments, concerns and complaints can be made by email to complaints@northamptoncollege.ac.uk, post or by completing one of the *"Tell us how we're doing"* forms provided by the College reception.

- If complaints are submitted anonymously, the information provided will be considered, investigated and actions taken as appropriate, but feedback will not be provided to the anonymous complainant, and they will be informed of this when their complaint is acknowledged.

- The Quality Office will send the complaint to the relevant manager who will respond via an appropriate channel explaining what has happened as a result of the complaint. Where this involves a member of staff, specific details of action taken will not be made available. This is to ensure that our employees are afforded appropriate dignity at work.

- Support can be provided to ensure that all complainants can access and complete this complaints procedure easily and effectively. For example, information can be provided in an alternative format or language, complainants can be provided with assistance to raise a formal complaint or meetings can be held in an accessible format or location.
- There will be occasions when the complainant remains dissatisfied after all stages of the process have been completed. If the complainant tries to re-open the same issue, they will be informed in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is now closed. If the complainant writes again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be recognised as vexatious and there will be no obligation on the part of the College to respond. The complainant may contact the DfE or OIA as appropriate if they wish to take the matter further (see Section 6).
- All compliments, concerns and complaints will be fed into the Curriculum Review or other service review systems for discussion and actions if appropriate.

- Compliments, concerns and complaints will be reported to appropriate College groups on a termly basis.

6. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage 1 – Informal

If you have a complaint, you should take it up in the first instance with the member of staff directly concerned or the manager of the area. This is often best done verbally and informally, although you may present your complaint in writing if you wish.

Informal procedures endeavour to stop problems before they develop into more serious issues and offer a swifter solution for all parties.

Where the issues raised affect a number of students, those students can submit a complaint as a group complaint. In such circumstances, to manage the progression of the complaint, we may ask the group to nominate one student to act as a group representative. Northampton College may deal with the representative only and expect the representative to liaise with the rest of the group.

The manager will attempt to resolve the issue by exploring the complaint and relaying the outcome back to the complainant.

The Quality Office will record the complaint and the outcome in the Informal Complaints Log.

All complaints will be reviewed termly by the Quality Office who will be identifying any themes that are emerging or procedures/systems that need reviewing.

Most complaints do not progress beyond this initial stage. However, if a complainant is still unhappy with the outcome and a further complaint is received, the formal stage can be evoked.

Stage 2 – Formal

A formal complaint in normally appropriate when initial attempts have failed (see above), or the situation is deemed to be serious. Formal complaints must be made in writing either by email, letter, or the Complaints Form in Appendix B.

When a formal complaint is received in the Quality Office it is logged and a letter of acknowledgment is sent to the complainant within two teaching days.

It is important that the details listed are as follows:

- Your name (information provided in a complaint may be considered, investigated and actions taken as appropriate, but feedback will not be provided to the anonymous complainant) How you may be contacted
- The general nature of your complaint
- The specific substance of your complaint (including names, dates and documentary evidence where relevant)
- Details of the action you have taken under the informal stage, and the outcome, reason for your dissatisfaction and any proposals you may have for its satisfactory resolution.

The complaint will be referred to the appropriate manager who will investigate and seek to resolve the complaint. Once this is completed the complainant will receive a final written response from the assigned manager with a copy sent to the Quality Office within three teaching weeks informing them of the outcome. (This may take longer in non-term time, or the investigation may take longer to resolve).

Stage 3 – Appeal

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from Stage 2, Stage 3 of the procedure may be instigated within ten working days of receipt of the outcome at Stage 2. The request for an appeal must be made in writing to the Quality Office.

A request for appeal may be brought under the following grounds:

- A review of the procedures followed at Stage 2 (note this will only review whether the correct procedure was followed).
- A consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable; or
- New material evidence which the complainant was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

When requesting an appeal at stage 3, a clear statement should be provided identifying which of the grounds above are the basis of the appeal. Appeals which do not fall under any of these grounds may be rejected. Appeals received outside of the ten working days period may be rejected.

Appeals will be reviewed by a manager of assistant principal level or above and will be signed off by a member of the Executive Leadership Team. Note that the issues will not usually be considered afresh or further investigation undertaken unless appropriate new material evidence is submitted.

In exceptional circumstances, for example where the complaint contains a serious allegation that relates to a member of the Executive Leadership Team, the appeal may be referred to a Governor or an independent external body or person.

An appeal decision will be provided in writing within fifteen teaching days.

DfE / OIA

If the Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy has been completed and you do not feel your complaint has been resolved, further education students or apprentices can contact the Department for Education (DfE).

https://www.gov.uk/complain-further-education-apprenticeship

If you are a Higher Education student we will send you a 'Completion of Procedures' letter within 28 days of all our internal processes being completed. This letter will provide you with details of the date you reached the end of our procedures, what we have considered under these procedures, that there may be the possibility of taking your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator if you do not feel it has been resolved and the deadline for doing this. More details of this can be found on the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's website - Students - OIAHE

7. Monitoring and Reporting

A report on compliments, concerns and complaints received will be presented to the Senior Leadership Group annually. This will include monitoring for adverse impact on protected and vulnerable group

8. Associated Policies

- Staff Grievance Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Behaviour and Intervention Policy and Procedures
- Admissions Policy and Procedures

9. Approval Process

- Senior Leadership Group
- Corporation
- Principal

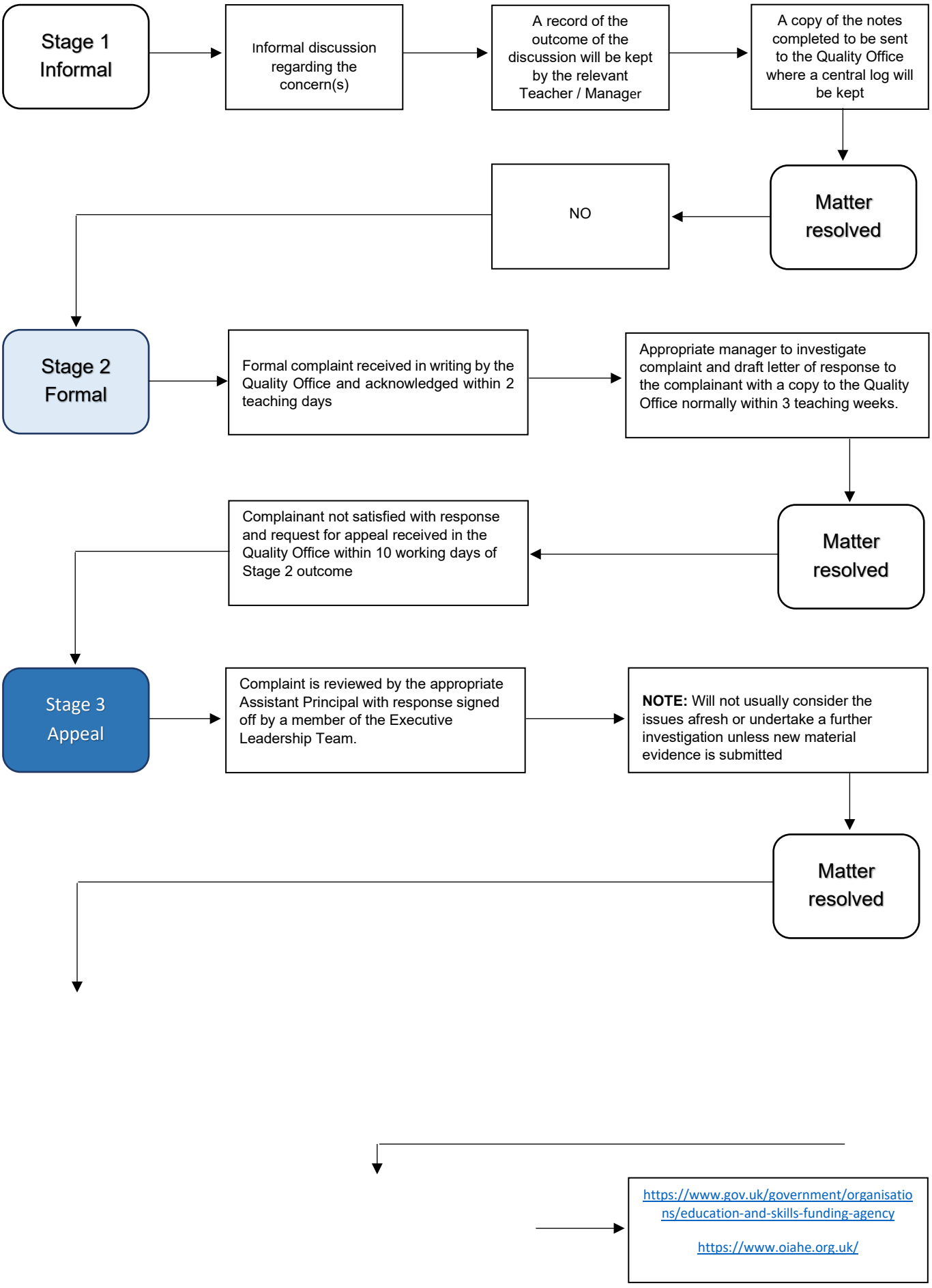
10. Appendices:

Appendix 1: Complaints Process Summary

Appendix 2: Complaints Form

Appendix 3: Request for Appeal Form

Appendix 1: Complaints Process Summary



Appendix 2: Complaints Form

Northampton College is committed to providing high quality services and we welcome feedback to help us achieve this. Please complete this form, including as much information as possible. The complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

Name:	**Address:**
Course:	
Tel. No:	**Email address:**
Please set out clearly the nature and origin of your complaint: (Please continue overleaf in necessary and include documentary evidence where relevant)	
Please detail the steps you have taken to resolve your complaint informally including the outcome and reason for your dissatisfaction: (Please continue overleaf if necessary)	
Please describe what we can do to resolve the matter:	
Signature:	**Date:**

Please return your completed form to the Quality Office via the College reception, by email (complaints@northamptoncollege.ac.uk) or by post (Booth Lane, Northampton, NN3 3RF)

Appendix 3: Appeal Form

This form is to be completed in accordance with Stage 3 of the Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy and should be submitted to the Quality Office via the College reception, by email (complaints@northamptoncollege.ac.uk) or by post (Booth Lane, Northampton, NN3 3RF).

Please do not complete this form unless you have completed Stages 1 and 2 of the procedure.

A complaint will not be investigated if this form has not been completed in full or if it is anonymous.

<table>
<tr><td>Name:</td><td rowspan="2">Address:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Course:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tel. No:</td><td>Email address:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Grounds for Appeal
A request for review may be made on limited grounds, including but not confined to:
• A review of the procedures followed at the formal stage;
• Consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances; or
• There is new material evidence which you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

The review stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Grounds for Appeal:
(Please tick as appropriate)</td><td>A procedural irregularity</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>The outcome was unreasonable</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>There is new material evidence available</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Please explain your grounds for appeal, how you have been disadvantaged by this and list the evidence to support your grounds.
Include reasons why you did not submit this at an earlier stage. Continue overleaf if necessary.</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Please state your preferred outcome:</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Declaration:
“I declare that the information given in this form is true to the best of my knowledge and that I would be willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary.”</td></tr>
<tr><td>Signature:</td><td colspan="2">Date:</td></tr>
</table>