COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Purpose and scope

Goodenough College is committed to providing high-quality services, facilities, accommodation and an exceptional Member experience. The College aims to resolve concerns fairly, promptly and transparently and to use complaints as an opportunity to improve its services.

The College always welcomes constructive criticism as an aid to monitoring and raising service levels and Members' opinions are valued. The College seeks feedback from Members during the year, normally in the form of surveys, with the aim of continually improving the services and the facilities that the College offers. Feedback will occasionally also be sought by other means such as working groups, open fora and comments forms. General, non-personal issues or ideas for enhancements should be raised through the Members' Council.

This Procedure applies to:

- Current Members of the College;
- Resident family Members;
- Recognised alumni;
- Local residents;
- Visitors; and
- Members of the public whose complaint relates to the College's activities, services, facilities, staff, contractors, events or property.

For the purposes of this Procedure:

- A *current Member* is a person permanently resident at the College.
- A *past Member* is a recognised alumnus of the College.

This Procedure does not apply to applicants to the College, applicants for scholarships or funding, or former Members who have been excluded following disciplinary action or breaches of College policies, Terms and Conditions or other College regulations. This procedure is not for use by College employed or contracted staff who should refer to their own Staff Handbook or procedures.

Group complaints may be submitted where all complainants sign the complaint and nominate one individual as the primary contact. The College will communicate only with the nominated representative.

Complaints from non-members will normally be considered in accordance with the principles of this Procedure, although the College may adapt the process where aspects of the Procedure are not relevant.

Members may seek advice on the operation of this Procedure from the Registrar or their nominee. However, the Registrar or nominee cannot assist with drafting complaints as this would conflict with their role in the process.

Matters excluded from the Procedure

The following matters will not normally be considered under this Procedure:

- Complaints about the work or procedures of the Members' Council;
- Anonymous complaints;
- Complaints about bullying, harassment or discrimination by members of staff, which should be raised through Human Resources procedures;

- Complaints about the conduct of other Members, which will normally be considered under the College's Disciplinary Procedure;
- Complaints relating to sexual misconduct or sexual harassment, which will be considered under the College's Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy; and
- Complaints from third parties who do not have appropriate authority to act on behalf of a complainant.

The College reserves the right not to consider complaints that are frivolous, vexatious, repetitious, outside its jurisdiction or unsupported by sufficient information to enable a reasonable investigation.

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction requiring investigation, response or redress. This may include:

- Repeated failure to address a reported issue;
- A serious failure in service delivery;
- A breach of an agreed arrangement;
- Significant inconvenience caused by the College's actions or omissions; or
- Inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff or contractor.

Routine service requests, including maintenance fault reporting, are not complaints. However, complaints about service standards, delays or repeated failures to address reported maintenance issues may be considered under this Procedure.

Roles and responsibilities

Stage	Responsibility
Informal Resolution	Relevant member of staff or line manager
Formal Complaint (Stage 1)	Registrar, Deputy Registrar or Dean
Complaints about Staff	HR Manager (or College Director where appropriate)
Review / Appeal (Stage 2)	College Executive Team
Records and Monitoring	Registrar and Deputy Registrar
External Escalation	National Code Complaints Investigator (where applicable)

The College may appoint an alternative investigator where necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, ensure impartiality or in the event of relevant staff absence.

Data protection and confidentiality

The College will process personal data in accordance with UK data protection legislation and the College Privacy Notice. Information may be shared where necessary to investigate or resolve a complaint. Complaint records will be retained in accordance with the College's Records Retention Schedule. Further information about how the College processes personal data and individuals' rights can be found in the College Privacy Notice.

The College will treat complaints discreetly, sensitively and in confidence wherever possible. However, information may be disclosed where necessary to investigate a complaint, protect individuals, comply with legal obligations or fulfil the College's legitimate interests.

Informal resolution

The College aims to resolve concerns informally wherever possible and at the earliest opportunity. Members are normally expected to seek informal resolution before making a formal complaint unless this would be inappropriate due to the seriousness or nature of the issue.

The most effective approach is often to raise the matter directly with the member of staff responsible for the service or activity concerned.

Formal complaint: Stage 1

Where informal resolution has not been successful, is inappropriate, or has not been achieved within a reasonable timeframe, a formal complaint may be submitted to the Registrar, Deputy Registrar or Dean.

Complaints should be submitted as soon as possible after the matter giving rise to the complaint. Complaints relating to a specific incident should normally be submitted within one month of the incident concerned. Complaints submitted after this period may be considered at the discretion of the College.

The complaint should clearly state:

- The nature of the complaint;
- Relevant facts, dates and individuals involved;
- Any supporting evidence; and
- The outcome sought by the complainant.

The complaint should include all matters the complainant wishes to have considered. New grounds of complaint will not normally be introduced later in the process.

The College will acknowledge a formal complaint within three working days and will normally provide a substantive response within ten working days. Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed within ten working days of the reasons for the delay and the anticipated response date. Accommodation-related complaints that have not received a response within 28 days may be referred to the National Codes Complaints Investigator.

The College may consult relevant staff, contractors or other parties during its investigation. Individuals who are the subject of a complaint will normally be given an opportunity to respond.

Complaints about staff

Complaints concerning members of staff, including contracted staff, should be submitted to the HR Manager or their nominee. Complaints concerning the HR Manager should be submitted to the College Director.

Such complaints will be considered in accordance with relevant employment policies and procedures. The complaints process is intended to investigate the concerns raised and does not constitute a disciplinary process against any member of staff.

Third-party representatives

The College will only accept complaints from parents, family members or other third parties where the Member has provided written authority for that individual to act on their behalf. The College will communicate with one authorised representative only.

Formal complaint: Stage 2 (Appeal)

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 1 complaint, they may request a Stage 2 review within one month of the Stage 1 decision.

A Stage 2 review may be requested on one or more of the following grounds:

- Procedural irregularity;
- Relevant mitigating circumstances not previously considered; or
- New evidence that could not reasonably have been provided at Stage 1.

The review will be conducted by a member of the College Executive Team who has not previously been involved in the matter.

The reviewer may:

- Uphold the original decision;
- Require further investigation;
- Amend the outcome; or
- Dismiss the complaint where it has already been considered fairly and reasonably.

The College will normally issue a Stage 2 outcome within 14 days. The Stage 2 decision represents the completion of the College's internal complaints process.

National Code for Assured Accommodation

Goodenough College is a Member of the National Code for Assured Accommodation (www.nationalcode.org), specifically the National Code of Standards for Larger Developments. A Member may make a complaint through the National Code regarding an alleged breach of the Code by the College. Normally, a complaint may only be referred to the National Code after the College's internal complaints procedure, including Stage 2, has been completed. However, accommodation-related complaints may also be referred to the National Code where the College has not provided a response within 28 days of the complaint being lodged.

Policy Information

Originator	Caroline Persaud, Registrar
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Reviewer	Registrar
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