



Have Your Say Policy (incorporating suggestions and compliments)

BEDFORD COLLEGE SERVICES

BCS

Purpose

Bedford College Services takes all complaints and suggestions seriously. As part of its commitment to high-quality service, the group listens to, records, acts on information received and provides appropriate feedback. This process ensures that all concerns/comments are dealt with professionally and are resolved as soon as possible.

Bedford College Service complaints policy has been developed to:

- Be easily accessible
- Be simple to understand and use
- Allow speedy handling with established time limits for action
- Keep people informed of progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality
- Provide information to managers so that services can be improved.

Making a complaint

Who can make a complaint?

Any person affected by Bedford College Services.

Anonymous complaints/suggestions will be considered, dependent on the seriousness of the complaint and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources. However, Bedford College Services is unable to respond to anonymous comments.

When should I complain?

Complaints can be made at any time, but as close as possible to the actual incident

Procedure

Informal Complaints – Stage 0

If you are dissatisfied with the service or treatment you receive you should first raise the matter with a member of staff. Tell them exactly what you are unhappy about and ask for their help in putting it right. Most problems will be resolved quickly and informally in this way.

Issues raised verbally to a member of staff will be, wherever possible, dealt with immediately by the staff member. However, there may be some instances where the complaint is referred to the appropriate line manager.

Formal Complaints – Stage 1

Where it has not been possible to satisfactorily resolve matters informally, a formal complaint should be emailed to the Bedford College Services via Leanne Cripps: feedback@bedfordcollegeservices.co.uk

This approach provides the fastest and most accurate way to feedback to us.

These will be forwarded to the department Manager as soon as possible in order for the complaint to be formally logged and processed.

To ensure a prompt response the complaint must be specific and comprehensively documented. The complainant should present full details, including:

- name and address of the complainant,
- any relevant documentation, dates, locations and witnesses as appropriate
- any previous unsuccessful attempts at resolution
- what reasonable steps should be taken to resolve the complaint.

The complainant should expect to receive an acknowledgement of their written complaint within 2 working days.

The complainant will normally receive a response from the investigating Manager within 4 working days setting out the result of the investigation and any actions that will be taken. However, where complaints involve complex or multiple complaints, in order to ensure that the investigation process is complete and robust, investigations may take longer.

If the investigation is likely to exceed 14 working days, we will contact the complainant and tell them when we expect a response to be available.

Communication with the complainant will be via their preferred route, i.e. post, email, etc. If a preferred route isn't indicated, the response will be via the medium that the complaint was initially sent.

Appeal - Stage Two

If a Stage One complaint is closed but it is felt that the complaint remains unresolved, complainants can make a formal appeal. Any comments about the way in which the complaint was dealt with, or any appeal against the findings and/or actions, should be made in writing to the *Managing Director* setting out the grounds for appeal, within five working days of receipt of the outcome.

The request should include:

- full and specific details of why the complainant wishes to appeal the Stage One decision
- The appeal will be acknowledged prior to any investigation.

The *Managing Director* will review the evidence and respond to the complainant within five working days of being appointed. Where appeals involve complex or multiple complaints, in order to ensure that the investigation process is complete and robust, investigations may take longer.

If the investigation is likely to exceed five working days, we will contact the complainant and tell them when we expect a response to be available.

The outcome of the appeal is the final decision of the college and no further internal investigation will take place relating to this specific complaint.

Upheld complaints

Upheld complaints are recorded and monitored on an annual basis.

Praise and Suggestions

Praise and suggestions provided through L Cripps: lcripps@bedfordcollegeservices.co.uk are also welcome and valuable to Bedford College Services as a whole. These comments are recorded and passed on to the relevant department and/or person.

General Points

Anonymous feedback cannot receive a formal response, but may still be recorded and investigated.

Abusive feedback containing offensive language is not tolerated. Whilst it is recognised that some communication may be written in anger, it is unlikely that abusive communication containing offensive language will be taken seriously.

How we value feedback

Bedford College Services takes the view that complaints provide valuable feedback that allows us to improve our service. All complainants have the opportunity to raise matters of concern without risk of being disadvantaged, discriminated against or victimised as a result of making a complaint. All complaints, whether formal or informal, will be recognised and dealt with sympathetically and constructively. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

In addition to wanting to deal quickly and effectively with any complaints, Bedford College services is also very pleased to receive praise or suggestions for how things can be improved.

Whilst the use of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are supported, it is not recommended that feedback is given to Bedford College Services this way. A number of more secure alternatives are provided.

Data Retention

Complaints, praise and suggestions received by Bedford College Services will be securely retained for a total period of seven years. The information retained will include:

All correspondence relating to the praise/suggestion/complaint

All items relating to the decision being made for each stage of the process

Date Policy written: 04 January 2019

Date Policy reviewed _____

Date to review: 04 January 2021