



Complaints Policy 2025- 2027

Equality Impact Assessment: Askham Bryan College recognises the importance of the Equality Act 2010 and its duties under the Act. This document has been assessed to ensure that it does not adversely affect staff, students or stakeholders on the grounds of any protected characteristics.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Askham Bryan College is committed to providing a quality service to its students and continually seeks ways to improve the student experience. However, the College recognises that despite its best efforts, there will be times when things go wrong and it may be necessary to make a complaint about the service or experience received. That includes (but is not limited to) students as well as other stakeholders, such as parents, guardians and carers, and visitors to the College.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all complaints with the exception of HE.

Higher Education

- 2.2 For complaints relating to Higher Education (HE) provision and University Centre Askham Bryan ("UCAB"), please see the HE Students Complaints Policy.

A summary of the complaints process is at Appendix 1.

Concerns falling outside the scope of this Policy

- 2.3 Some concerns raised, may fall outside the scope of this Complaints Policy and instead constitute a claim for example, a formal demand for financial loss, damages, personal injury, or breach of contract, with potentially the threat of legal proceedings if they feel the College's response is not satisfactory, whereas a complaint is usually a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable, with a request (although not always) to remedy the situation. (How the complaint is set out will usually be an indication).
- 2.4 Where a submission appears to involve legal liability, financial compensation, or matters better addressed under the institution's insurance, contractual, or legal procedures, it will be redirected accordingly. If a complaint is assessed as potentially being a claim, the matter will be referred to the appropriate internal team (e.g., Legal Services, Finance) for further consideration. The complainant will be informed of this referral and advised of the next steps. In such cases, the timescales and processes

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set out in this Complaints Policy may no longer apply.

- 2.5 In matters not specifically covered by this policy, the College reserves the right to apply reasonable discretion based on the overall intent of this policy. Any unforeseen scenarios will be handled on a case-by-case basis, maintaining consistency with organisational values.

3. HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

- 3.1 In the first instance, the College will try and resolve any complaint informally. Attempts will be made to try and resolve the matter locally with the department or with the relevant course manager or member of staff.
- 3.2 If an informal resolution is not possible, then the complaint can be escalated to Stage 2.

Stage 2 - Formal consideration of the complaint

- 3.3 If an informal resolution has not been possible, or has not resolved the complaint to your satisfaction, then you can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 and make a formal complaint using the form at Appendix 2. A copy of the completed **Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form** should be sent to the Principal and Chief Executive's Office either:
- By email: enquiries@askham-bryan.ac.uk
 - Or Post: The Principal and Chief Executive's Office, Askham Bryan College, Askham Bryan, York, YO23 3FR

Supporting documents

- 3.4 So that we can investigate your complaint properly, please make sure to provide any documents you have in support of your complaint/all relevant information to us at this stage.

Timescales

For raising a formal complaint (Stage 2)

- 3.5 Complaints should be raised as soon as possible following the incident/issue of complaint emerging and ideally, no later than three months from the date of the incident/issue or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

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For responding to a formal complaint (Stage 2)

- 3.6 Formal complaints will be acknowledged within 2 working days¹ of receipt.
- 3.7 An Investigating Officer will then be appointed who will have 10 working days to investigate and prepare a response to your complaint.
- 3.8 If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint at Stage 2, then you can appeal the outcome, provided you do so within 10 working days of the complaint outcome being communicated to you. Appeals submitted outside of this timescale will only be responded to at the College's discretion.
- 3.9 Any appeal response will be communicated within 10 working days.
- 3.10 **Please note that, whilst the issues raised in an anonymous complaint can still be brought to the attention of the appropriate College staff, it will not be possible to investigate and provide a formal written response to the issues raised in the normal manner. Also, there may be periods when the above timeframes are not possible such as during holiday periods, due to staff availability or the complexity of the complaint.**
- 3.11 The College will also not investigate complaints from parents/guardians of students aged 18 or over without the written permission of the student.

Stage 3 - Appeal against the complaint outcome

- 3.12 You can appeal directly to the Principal and Chief Executive where you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the initial complaint.
- 3.13 The original decision will be reviewed by either a Vice Principal or one of the Assistant Principals.
- 3.14 We aim to conclude the appeal process normally within 10 working days and will contact you with the outcome. This decision constitutes the final stage of the College Complaints Policy and there will be no further right of appeal.
- 3.15 In the circumstances where the Vice Principal/Assistant Principal overturns the original decision, the Vice Principal/Assistant Principal will confirm the new decision and reasons for that to you in writing.

Escalating the complaint to external organisations

- 3.16 You have the right to escalate your complaint to external agencies as appropriate (for example, to an awarding body, the Department for Education ("DfE"), Ofsted, etc).
- 3.17 However, you are encouraged to exhaust the College's internal complaints process first, before escalating your complaint to an external organisation.

¹ Please note references to "working days" are to College working days

4. SUMMARY OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

4.1 Appendix 1 shows the process and timeline for making a complaint.

Data protection complaints

4.2 If your complaint is because you feel your rights under data protection legislation have been breached or have not been respected, please submit your complaint to enquiries@askham-bryan.ac.uk using the Stage 2 complaint form.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 **The Assistant Principal (Quality and Performance) will** ultimately be responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and associated procedure.

5.2 **All College staff will:**

- Conduct themselves appropriately and professionally when dealing with the College's stakeholders;
- Undertake regular training and development;
- Report any complaints to the PA to the Principal and Chief Executive so a record can be kept and any complaints logged and or raised with the College's insurers, if necessary.

6. UNREASONABLE AND VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

6.1 Askham Bryan College staff are entitled to:

- a workplace free from bullying, intimidation, harassment or victimisation;
- be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy;
- experience no form of unlawful discrimination;
- be valued for their skills and abilities.

and should not have to tolerate inappropriate or unreasonable behaviour when responding to a complaint. This extends also to how staff are treated by parents/guardians/carers, visitors to the College and members of the public.

Inappropriate or unreasonable behaviour will not be tolerated.

6.2 Askham Bryan College defines 'inappropriate or unreasonable behaviour' as:

- refusing to articulate the complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process;
- refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;
- insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice;

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- introducing trivial or irrelevant information which is expected to be taken into account and commented on;
- raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insisting they are fully answered, often immediately and to timescales other than the timescales set out in this policy and associated procedure;
- making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeking to have staff replaced;
- changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly making the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refusing to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the College's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed;
- seeking an unrealistic outcome;
- making excessive demands on College time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint while the complaint is being dealt with;
- using bad language or swearing at College staff;
- any physical violence or threat of physical violence;
- verbal abuse;
- raising of voice so as to be intimidating;
- any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine;
- use of foul or abusive language;
- harassment;
- persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff (requests will be met wherever possible and explanations given when they cannot);
- knowingly providing falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

- 6.3 The College can, at its discretion, refuse to correspond with a Complainant and or investigate a complaint(s) where it is felt that this is either unreasonable and or vexatious.
- 6.4 Complainants should therefore try to limit their communication with the College to just that which relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as this could delay the outcome of the complaint.
- 6.5 Please see the College's Zero Tolerance Policy for further details which is available at <https://www.askham-bryan.ac.uk/zero-tolerance/>

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 7.1 The Assistance Principal (Quality and Performance) will maintain oversight of the effectiveness of these arrangements. This procedure and the implementation arrangements which underpin it will be reviewed every 2 years by the Head of Quality.

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7.2 This policy is regularly monitored to address any new circumstances encountered. Unforeseen issues handled outside this policy should be reported to the Assistant Principal (Quality and Performance) and Head of Quality cc the Legal and Compliance Adviser for potential inclusion in future revisions.

8. SUPPORTING/RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Data Protection Policy
- Data Subject Rights Policy
- HE Students Complaints Policy
- Support for Continuing Studies Policy
- Support for Continuing Studies Procedures
- Policy against Peer on Peer Abuse (Students)
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Zero Tolerance Policy

9. REGULATIONS

9.1 In all aspects of this process the College will comply with the following regulations:

- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR (UK General Data Protection Regulation)
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

10. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date of Issue: 8th October 2025 and 29th May 2026 (update)

Approved on: 17th September 2025 and update on 20th May 2026

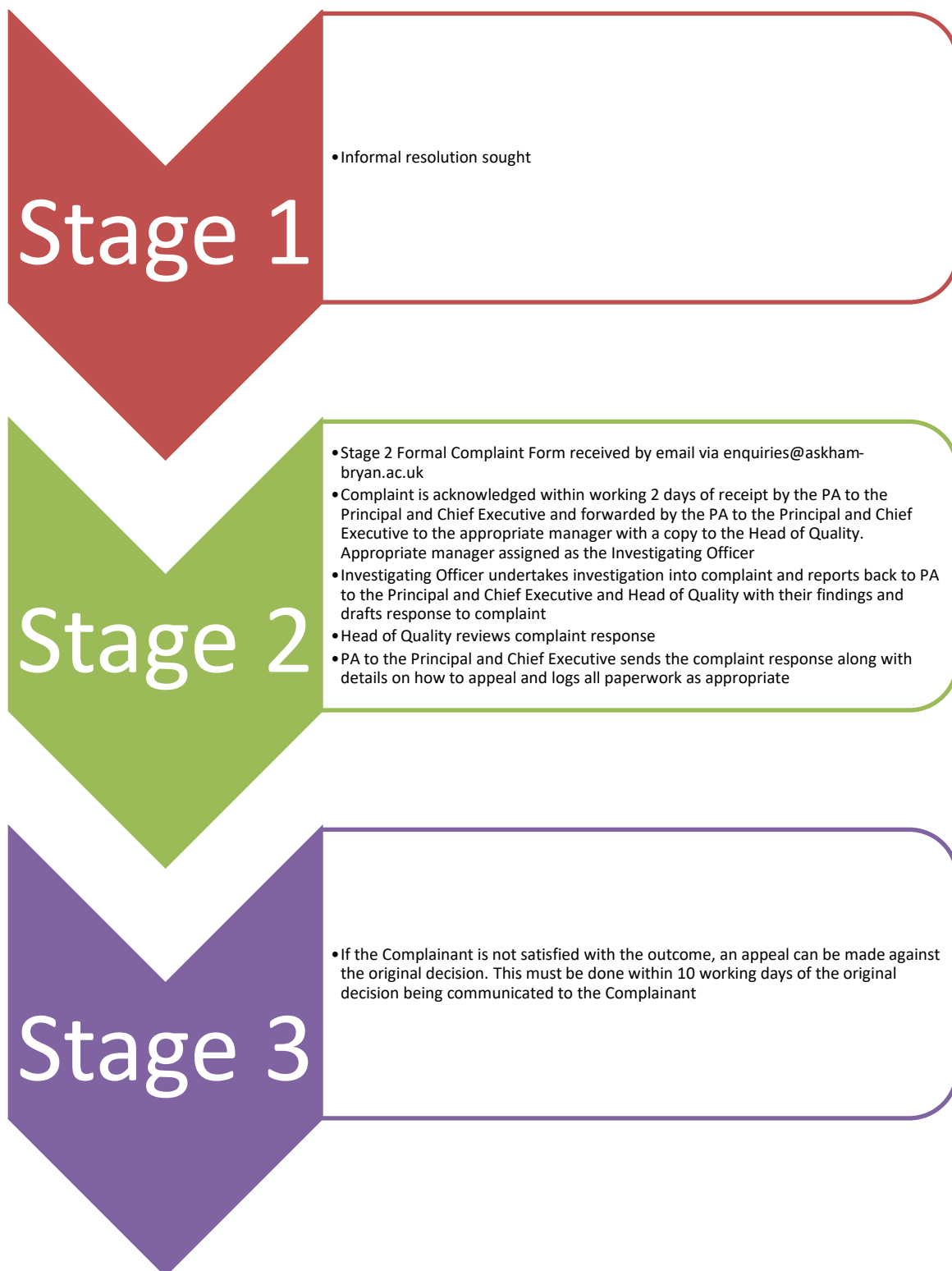
Next review: August 2027

SLT Owner: Assistant Principal (Quality and Performance)

Author: Head of Quality

Publication requirements: PUBLIC

APPENDIX 1 – Summary of complaints process



Data protection complaints

If your complaint is because you feel your rights under data protection legislation have been breached or have not been respected, please submit your complaint to enquiries@askham-bryan.ac.uk using the Stage 2 complaint form.

Appendix 2 – Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form



Stage 2 Formal Complaints Form

HE students should complete a separate form, available from <https://www.askham-bryan.ac.uk/publication-scheme-higher-education/>

<p>This form is designed for use at the Formal Stage of the Complaints Policy (Stage 2) and should only be used if raising your concern informally, for instance, with your Course Tutor, Course Manager or Head of Department or with the College has not brought the matter to a satisfactory resolution. Please ensure that you have read and understood the Complaints Policy before completing this form. Once completed, Stage 2 Formal Complaint Forms should be submitted to the Principal and Chief Executive's Office either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by email: enquiries@askham-bryan.ac.uk • or by post: The Principal and Chief Executive's Office, Askham Bryan College, Askham Bryan, York, YO23 3FR <p>Please complete each part of this form in full and provide any supporting information at the point of submission.</p> <p>The College will not investigate complaints from parents/guardians of students aged 18 or over without the written permission of the student.</p>	
Part 1: Complainant Details	
Forename	
Surname	
Email address for response	
Phone Number	
Course of Study	
<p><i>If the complaint is a collective complaint on behalf of several students, please complete the above information for each complainant on an additional sheet as appropriate. Additional sheets should be submitted together and a cross placed in the box to indicate the presence of additional sheets.</i></p>	
Part 2: Details of the Complaint	
<p>Please set out clearly and concisely the main points of your complaint and why you are complaining. You should also include details of dates, locations, and any witnesses.</p>	

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Part 3: Outcome Sought
Please indicate a reasonable outcome or future action you are wanting in resolution to your complaint.
Please suggest any future action that can be taken by the College to prevent this issue recurring.
Part 4: Previous Resolution Sought
Before a complaint is raised formally all reasonable steps must have been completed to raise the complaint informally. If you have tried to resolve your complaint informally, please say what steps you have taken and who you raised the matter with.
What was the outcome and why are you still dissatisfied?
Part 5: Declaration by Complainant(s)
I (we), the undersigned, submit this form in relation to Stage 2 of Askham Bryan College's Complaint Policy. I agree under the Data Protection Act 2018 that any information given on this form may be shared with appropriate parties in the active resolution of my complaint including, where necessary, any staff member complained about. I also give explicit consent that records relating to my studies or other associated matters (including those relating to assessment and/or requests made by me for mitigating circumstances and other records held) may be accessed, as necessary, in order to investigate my complaint. I further declare that this complaint is submitted in good faith and is not frivolous, malicious, nor vexatious.
<i>For collective complaints this must be signed by all complainants.</i>
Signed (Complainant): _____
Date: _____