Procedure for Complaints against the Corporation

1. A complaint against the Corporation, a Board Member (including the Principal & CEO if the complaint relates to their role as a Board Member), a non-Corporation Member serving on a committee of the Corporation, or the Director of Governance may be made by an individual or an organisation in relation to their dealings with the College. Complaints must relate to[1]:

   1.1. the performance by the Corporation, a Board Member or the Director of Governance or the functions respectively allocated to them under the Articles of Government of the College; and/or
   1.2. the exercise by the Corporation of its powers; and/or
   1.3. any other alleged breach or non-observance of the duties of the Corporation, individual Board Members or the Director of Governance under the Instrument or Articles of Government of the College, its Code of Conduct for Board Members, relevant provisions of the DfE Accountability Agreement and/or the College Financial Handbook or the Code of Good Governance.

2. All complaints should be made in writing, identifying the complainant[2] and addressed to the Director of Governance (save where the complaint is in relation to the Director of Governance in which case it should be addressed to the Chair of Corporation) at:

   Buckinghamshire College Group
   Oxford Road
   Aylesbury
   Buckinghamshire
   HP21 8PD

3. The complainant will be expected to state clearly the nature of and grounds for the complaint (see paragraph 1 above) and, if appropriate, provide copies of any related documentation. The complainant should also state the remedy they are seeking. It is not possible for a complainant to seek the disciplining of a member of staff or the removal of a Board Member or the Director of Governance since these are decisions for the Principal & CEO of the College and the Corporation respectively in accordance with the Instrument and Articles of Government of the College.

4. The Director of Governance to the Corporation will:

   4.1. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within seven working days;
   4.2. Consider the complaint and determine whether referral for investigation is required and, if so, the most appropriate person or body to undertake the investigation, having regard to the nature and seriousness of the matters raised; and
   4.3. Where referral is considered appropriate, refer the complaint to one or more of the following for investigation: the College's Audit & Risk Committee; one of more Board Members; a person (nominated by an external sector body) who has substantial experience of college governance (provided in each case that they have not been involved in the matters subject to the complaint).

[1] Exceptionally, a complaint outside the parameters that follow may fall to be considered by the Corporation, e.g. a complaint against a member of staff, if the complaint is regarding the way in which the College has dealt with an earlier substantive complaint and may therefore raise issues as to the adequacy of the Corporation's oversight of College management.

[2] Where the complainant has indicated that they wish to remain anonymous they should be warned that in order to take effective action in respect of the complaint it may be necessary to reveal their identity on a "need to know" basis during any investigation. Where a complaint is received anonymously, it will not be appropriate to ignore such correspondence. Steps should normally be taken to establish whether, on the information available, a problem can be identified. If a problem is identified, remedial action should be taken. It may, however, be difficult to carry out a more detailed enquiry into a complaint without being able to interview the complainant and obtain the information that would be necessary to undertake a more robust enquiry.

5. Such person(s) shall:
   5.1. Consider the complaint and, if necessary in order to determine disputed issues of fact, interview the complainant and those subject of the complaint[3]. They may refer issues to the Corporation's auditors (external and/or internal) or other independent advisers as they feel appropriate; and
   5.2. Produce a written report of their findings in relation to the complaint and provide the complainant and the Corporation with a copy of such report as soon as possible. In any event, they shall produce an interim report within 28 days of the complaint being referred to them.

6. At its next scheduled Board meeting after receipt of the findings of the investigation the Corporation shall consider the findings and determine whether the complaint is substantiated in whole or part and, if so, what, if any, remedy should be granted to the complainant. Where the complaint relates to one or more specified Board Members or the Director of Governance those persons shall withdraw and take no part in the discussion of the investigation outcome.

7. The Director of Governance (or Chair of Corporation as appropriate) shall within seven working days of the Board's determination of the complaint provide a written response to the complainant and to those subject of the complaint confirming the decision of the Corporation in relation to the complaint, with reasons for its decision. The response may include details of any arrangements for pursuing the matter with any relevant external body (e.g. Secretary of State/DfE/FEC).

Reviewed by Search & Governance Committee: 24 September 2026
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Next Review Date: September 2028

[3] There is no legal right to be accompanied at such meetings but consideration may be given to whether interviewees should be entitled to be accompanied and, if so, by whom.