

Accommodation Complaints Policy

Policies and Procedures

Document History		
Originated by: Head of Campus Services	Date: 31/07/2023	Circulation: Student Services Team, Director of Estates, Website, Referenced in Student Handbook, circulated to residential student body
Approved by: Director of Estates	Date: 31/07/2023	
	Next review: 30/07/2024	

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 West Dean College is committed to providing its students with excellent accommodation during their studies. The College does recognise that there may be instances where students have legitimate complaints regarding their accommodation, services or facilities provided by the College. The College takes all such complaints seriously and will deal with them all according to this policy.
- 1.2 This policy is designed to ensure that all legitimate student complaints are heard and responded to in a manner that is fair, transparent, timely and based on the consideration of relevant evidence. It will safeguard, as far as reasonably practicable, the interests and well-being of any student making a complaint and of West Dean College staff who may be named or otherwise involved in a complaint.
- 1.3 The Accommodation Complaint Policy applies to all students who are on an award bearing course staying in West Dean accommodation.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 Through this policy, the College commits to:
 - Treat complaints with seriousness.
 - Ensure that complainants will not be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint.
 - Deal with complaints in a timely manner.
 - Answer all aspects of a complaint and ensure that the response is clear.
- 2.2 A student (or group of students) making a complaint should:
 - Be respectful and courteous in the submission of a complaint.
 - Seek a resolution that is reasonable and proportionate.
 - Provide a full explanation of their complaint in a timely fashion, along with supporting evidence.
 - Co-operate with this policy as far as is reasonably practicable.
- 2.3 A separate complaints policy is available for those wishing to raise a complaint relating to their course or studies (The Student Complaints and Appeals Policy).
- 2.4 All information submitted in relation to complaints shall be dealt with confidentially, and only disclosed as necessary to progress the complaint. All parties (including students) are expected to honour the confidentiality of complaints. All personal information shall be handled in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.

3 HANDLING OF COMPLAINT & TIMESCALES

- 3.1 Students should raise a complaint with the Student Services Team (SST): sst@westdean.ac.uk. Wherever this not possible, complaints should be directed to the Student Welcome team. Complaints can be made face-to-face, by phone, in writing or by email.
- 3.2 SST and Student Welcome have been trained in complaint handling and will escalate up to their line management when necessary. Complaints will be processed and escalated according to the process below.
- 3.3 Complaints should be raised as soon as practicable to enable prompt investigation and swift resolution. Students should raise the complaint within one month of the incident occurring.
- 3.4 Upon receiving a complaint, the College will acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days. After sufficient investigation, the College will provide a formal response within a maximum of 3 weeks.

- 3.5 The response provided by the College will confirm the action we propose to take and the overall timeframe in which they will be taken.
- 3.6 If a student, or group of students, wish to appeal the College's formal response, an appeal must be submitted to SST within 3 weeks of the date that the College response was issued. The appeal will be investigated according to the process below.
- 3.7 A record of the initial complaint, responses, and correspondence to reach an agreement will be logged.

COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Any issues or queries regarding accommodation should be raised informally via the Student Services Team. Maintenance issues will be resolved according to the timescales listed in the Student Accommodation Handbook.

If an issue is not resolved and/or a student wishes to make a formal complaint, they should follow the process below:

FORMAL COMPLAINT

1. Student submits complaint within one month of the incident occurring.
2. SST will acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days.
3. College Investigation – the Campus Services Manager will discuss with the Student Services Assistant, Housekeeping, Maintenance, Student Welcome, and any other relevant departments.
4. The Campus Services Manager will provide a formal response within 3 weeks of receiving the complaint.

APPEAL

1. If a student is dissatisfied with the result of the College's investigation, they can submit an appeal within 3 weeks of the date they receive the College's formal response.
2. SST will acknowledge the appeal within 3 working days.
3. Appeals will be escalated to the Head of Campus Services. On rare occasions, the Head of Campus Services may escalate the appeal to the Director of Estates.
4. The Head of Campus Services and/or Director of Estates will review the appeal and the Campus Service Manager's initial investigation.
5. The Head of Campus Services or Director of Estates will provide a formal response within 3 weeks of receiving the appeal.

All complaints and appeals should be emailed to sst@westdean.ac.uk.