COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy implemented:	April 2025
Last reviewed:	September 2026
Next review due:	September 2027

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Salutem Care & Education is committed to the fair and equitable treatment of all individuals in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy to ensure it can be applied consistently and without discrimination. Salutem Care & Education is committed to safe, high-quality, person-centred services that uphold people's rights and dignity.

All colleagues (including volunteers, agency workers and contractors) must follow this policy, guided by our values. Policies are reviewed every two years; if a review is delayed, the current version remains in force until approved by the Policy Sponsor.

Training will support understanding, and people we support will be involved in reviews. Local procedures may support this policy, but corporate policies must not be changed locally without formal approval.

This policy must be shared with all colleagues. The controlled version is on BLINK; printed/downloaded copies may be out of date

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1. Summary

1.1 Purpose

Beaumont College is committed to providing high-quality education, care and support for all learners. We value feedback and recognise that concerns, complaints and compliments provide valuable opportunities to improve services, strengthen relationships and maintain high standards across the College.

The College aims to resolve concerns and complaints fairly, promptly and transparently. We are committed to ensuring that all complaints are handled respectfully, consistently and without discrimination. We seek to create a culture where concerns can be raised openly and where individuals feel listened to, valued and supported throughout the process.

This policy operates alongside Salutem Care & Education's Feedback, Complaints and Compliments Policy and reflects the organisation's core principles of accessibility, transparency, confidentiality, responsiveness, fairness, support, learning, accountability and continuous improvement.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to complaints relating to Beaumont College and may be used by learners, parents, carers, advocates, commissioners, professionals, visitors and members of the public.

The policy applies to concerns or complaints regarding the services, facilities, education, support or actions of Beaumont College, except where alternative statutory procedures apply.

This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant safeguarding, whistleblowing, disciplinary and organisational policies.

2. Document Control

Policy Sponsor (Name & Role):	Vicky Muncaster (Assistant Principal)
Policy Reviewer (Name & Role):	Aaron Churchyard (Quality Manager for Education)
Approved by (Name/Role):	Melinda Glover (Quality Assurance Inspection & Regulation Director)

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Policy category (tick):	☐Safeguarding ☐ Health & Safety ☐ Care practice ☐ HR/People ☐ Education ☐ Information Governance ☐ Other: [ ]
Policy Applies to:	**People we Support** ☐ Children/young people ☐ Families/Carers ☐ Adults ☐ Learners **Workforce** ☐ Permanent ☐ Volunteers ☐ Bank ☐ Contractors ☐ Agency ☐ Other: [ ]

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4. Definitions

Concern

An expression of worry, doubt or query where clarification, reassurance or resolution is sought before a formal complaint is necessary.

Complaint

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, regarding actions taken, decisions made, services provided or a failure to act where a response or resolution is expected.

Complainant

Any individual making a complaint, including learners, parents, carers, advocates, professionals, commissioners or members of the public.

Representative

An individual acting on behalf of a complainant with appropriate consent.

Complaints Committee

A group appointed to consider complaints that have not been resolved through earlier stages of the complaints procedure.

Anonymous Complaint

A complaint submitted without the individual's identity being disclosed.

Principles

5.1 Our Commitment

Beaumont College is committed to maintaining positive relationships with learners, families, professionals and the wider community. We recognise that despite everyone's best efforts, concerns and complaints may arise from time to time.

We welcome feedback and view complaints as opportunities to improve our services, strengthen practice and enhance outcomes for learners. We are committed to dealing with concerns and complaints professionally, fairly and objectively whilst ensuring that all parties are treated with dignity and respect.

No individual will be disadvantaged for raising a concern or complaint in good faith.

5.2 Accessibility and Inclusion

The College is committed to ensuring that the complaints process is accessible to all.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where required to enable individuals to participate fully in the complaints process. This may include providing information in alternative formats, supporting individuals to submit complaints, arranging accessible meetings or facilitating communication through advocates or representatives.

The College recognises the diverse needs of learners and families and will seek to remove barriers which may prevent individuals from raising concerns or complaints.

5.3 Equality, Diversity and Fairness

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the College's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Complaints will be investigated impartially and decisions will be based upon evidence, facts and the individual circumstances of each case. The College will ensure that all individuals are treated fairly, consistently and respectfully throughout the process.

5.4 Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially wherever possible.

Information will only be shared with those who need to be involved in investigating, managing or resolving the complaint. The College will process information in accordance with data protection legislation and organisational information governance arrangements.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, confidentiality may need to be overridden in order to protect a learner or other individual from harm.

5.5 Resolving Concerns Early

The College encourages concerns to be raised as early as possible to enable prompt resolution. Many issues can be resolved quickly through discussion with relevant staff members, tutors, managers or senior leaders before they develop into formal complaints. Wherever appropriate, the College will seek to resolve concerns informally whilst ensuring that individuals feel listened to and their concerns are taken seriously.

5.6 Making a Complaint

Complaints may be made in person, in writing, by email, by telephone or through an authorised representative.

Complaints should normally be submitted within three months of the incident occurring, or within three months of the final incident where a series of related events has occurred. Complaints submitted outside these timescales may be considered where exceptional circumstances apply.

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, the Principal or Director for Education may determine that investigation is appropriate where the nature of the concern warrants further consideration.

5.7 Complaints Against Senior Leaders

Complaints relating to members of staff should normally be submitted to the Senior Leadership Team.

Complaints concerning the Senior Leadership Team should be addressed to the Divisional Director for Education and marked "Private and Confidential".

Complaints involving safeguarding matters, staff conduct, whistleblowing concerns or issues subject to separate statutory processes will be managed under the relevant procedures rather than through this policy.

5.8 Learning from Complaints

Beaumont College is committed to learning from complaints and using feedback to improve services.

The College recognises that complaints can identify opportunities to strengthen communication, improve processes, develop staff practice and enhance the experience of learners and families.

Outcomes from complaints will be reviewed regularly to identify recurring themes, trends and areas for improvement.

5.9 Stage 1: Informal Concern Resolution

It is in everyone's interests for concerns to be resolved at the earliest opportunity.

Concerns should initially be discussed with the member of staff involved or an appropriate manager. The College will seek to understand the nature of the concern, clarify the desired outcome and explore possible resolutions.

Where concerns cannot be resolved informally, individuals may choose to progress to the formal complaints stage.

5.10 Stage 2: Formal Complaint Investigation

Formal complaints should be submitted to the Senior Leadership Team unless the complaint relates to the Senior Leadership Team.

The College will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two college working days.

A delegated senior leader, will investigate the complaint. This may include reviewing documentation, meeting with relevant individuals and gathering evidence.

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A written response will normally be provided within twenty college working days. Where this timescale cannot be achieved, the complainant will be informed and provided with a revised response date.

The written outcome will explain:

- The findings of the investigation.
- The decision reached.
- The reasons for the decision.
- Any actions identified.
- How the complaint may be escalated if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

5.11 Stage 3: Review by Head Office and Complaints Committee

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, they may request a review within five college working days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome.

The complaint will be escalated to Salutem Care & Education Head Office and reviewed by an individual independent of the service concerned. Where necessary, a Complaints Committee may be convened.

The Complaints Committee will consist of individuals who have had no prior involvement in the complaint. At least one member will be independent of the leadership and management of Beaumont College.

The committee will consider all available evidence and determine whether:

- The complaint should be upheld in full.
- The complaint should be upheld in part.
- The complaint should not be upheld.

Where complaints are upheld, recommendations may be made to improve College practice, policies or procedures.

A written outcome will normally be provided within five college working days of the review meeting or decision.

5.12 External Escalation

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of the College's complaints process, they may contact relevant external organisations including:

- Local Authorities.
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.
- Care Quality Commission.
- Ofsted.
- Department for Education.
- Other relevant regulatory or statutory bodies.

The College will provide information and support regarding external escalation routes where appropriate. With the DFE complaint information below.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contact us, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for
Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

6. Monitoring, Audit and Compliance

The College will maintain records of complaints, investigations, actions and outcomes in accordance with organisational requirements and data protection legislation.

Complaints data will be reviewed regularly by senior leaders to identify themes, trends, risks and opportunities for service improvement.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through quality assurance processes, governance arrangements and organisational review procedures.

7. Areas of Responsibility

College Senior Leadership Team

The College Senior Leadership Team is responsible for overseeing implementation of this policy, ensuring complaints are investigated appropriately and promoting a culture of openness and continuous improvement.

Director for Education

The Divisional Director for Education is responsible for reviewing complaints escalated beyond the College and overseeing Stage 3 complaint processes where required.

Complaints Committee

The Complaints Committee is responsible for conducting independent reviews and ensuring complaints are considered fairly and objectively.

Staff

All staff are responsible for responding appropriately to concerns, supporting complaint investigations and contributing to effective resolutions where required.

Learners, Families and Stakeholders

Learners, families and stakeholders are encouraged to raise concerns promptly, engage constructively with the process and provide relevant information to support investigations.

8. Learning and Development

The College is committed to ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities regarding complaint handling and customer service.

Relevant staff will receive appropriate guidance and training to support effective communication, conflict resolution, safeguarding awareness and complaint management.

Learning from complaints will be incorporated into service development, quality assurance activity and professional development planning.

9. Associated Documents

- Salutem Feedback, Complaints and Compliments Policy

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy

10. Legal, Regulatory & Standards Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Further Education and Independent Specialist College regulatory requirements
- Department for Education complaints guidance
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman guidance

The College will ensure that complaints are managed lawfully, fairly and in accordance with statutory requirements.

11. Version Control

This is a controlled document. As a controlled document, any printed copies of this document, or saved onto local or network drives should be actively monitored to ensure the latest version is always available.

Version Number	Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Approved By

V1	April 2025	Julia Parks	New policy	Craig Harris
V1.1	January 2026	Lauren Hill	Reviewed	Aaron Churchyard
V2.0	September 2026	Vicky Muncaster	Policy fully reviewed and restructured into organisational policy framework. Strengthened accessibility, equality, governance, accountability, learning from complaints, monitoring and escalation arrangements whilst retaining existing complaint stages and timescales.	Aaron Churchyard

12. Appendices

- Appendix A: (e.g., checklist)
- Appendix B: (e.g., flowchart)