



Josephine Butler

Junior Common Room



Policy			
Complaints Policy			
Issue Date	September 2026	Reference	P/009
Next Review Due	September 2027	Review Cycle	Annual
Reviewing Panel	Board of Trustees		
Applicability	Employees Executive Committee Trustees Members Customers Contractors		

1. ABSTRACT

- 1.1. Josephine Butler Junior Common Room CIO (“the JCR”) is a registered charity, with a duty to ensure all stakeholders, established for the public benefit and the advancement of education of students at Josephine Butler College.
- 1.2. This Complaints Policy outlines the approach the JCR shall take to handling complaints.
- 1.3. This Complaints Policy shall complement the Discipline Policy (P/026), whose remit shall be to bring any disciplinary action, should a complaint be raised against an individual or a group of individuals.
- 1.4. The JCR strives to uphold its reputation, and as such:
 - 1.4.1. The JCR shall take all complaints seriously;
 - 1.4.2. The JCR shall deal with complaints promptly and sensitively;
 - 1.4.3. The JCR shall act with integrity, consistent with principles of natural justice, when handling complaints;
 - 1.4.4. The JCR shall take opportunities to learn and improve from any complaints.
- 1.5. The Complaints Policy is consistent with the JCR’s responsibilities under the 1994 Education Act.

2. ESTABLISHMENT AND SCOPE

- 2.1. The “Complaints Officer” shall be responsible for the oversight and execution of this Complaints Policy, and shall usually be the JCR President. The Complaints Officer is permitted to appoint a deputy.
- 2.2. A “complaint” shall be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction surrounding actions taken, or a lack of action taken.
- 2.3. This Complaints Policy shall address the following, unless an exception is noted in section 2.4:
 - 2.3.1. Complaints against a JCR Sport, Society, or Committee (“SSC”);
 - 2.3.2. Complaints about a JCR event;
 - 2.3.3. Complaints against an individual, or a group of individuals, who have brought the JCR into disrepute;
 - 2.3.4. Complaints against officers of the executive committee;
 - 2.3.5. Complaints against JCR role holders;
 - 2.3.6. Complaints against JCR members;
 - 2.3.7. Complaints against a non-JCR member involved in an event or SSC.
 - 2.3.8. Complaints against the JCR, as an organisation.
- 2.4. This Complaints policy does not address:
 - 2.4.1. Complaints against the procedure of an election, as the Campaign Regulations are defined under the JCR Standing Orders. An exception to this is if there is a conflict of any of the JCR’s policies;
 - 2.4.2. Complaints against student conduct, as the JCR is unable to provide any remedy;

- 2.4.3. Complaints against any affiliate organisation, or their members, as an affiliate may have their own policy and procedures. Though, alternative provisions are available in the Affiliations Policy;
- 2.4.4. Complaints of a safeguarding nature, which is handled under the JCR's Safeguarding Policy (P/006);
- 2.5. A complaint on procedural error shall be referred directly to Stage IV – Independent Review.
- 2.6. A complaint against an individual, or group of individuals, shall be handled by the Discipline Policy. Information in stage 3 shall be used as evidence for such case.

3. RAISING A COMPLAINT

- 3.1. The JCR shall accept a complaint within 28 working days of concern.
 - 3.1.1. The Complaints Officer is permitted to accept a late complaint in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.2. To raise a complaint, complainants must contact the JCR via email, at:
 - 3.2.1. butler.jcr@durham.ac.uk, the Complaints Officer, in usual circumstances.
 - 3.2.2. trustees.chair@butlerjcr.com, the Chair of Board of Trustees, if the complaint:
 - 3.2.2.1. Involves the complaints officer;
 - 3.2.2.2. In cases of complaints against individual or a group of individuals, if it is known by the complainant that the complaints officer has a conflict of interest with said individuals;
 - 3.2.2.3. A complaint regarding procedural irregularities in a previous complaint, and needing to be directed to Stage IV.
 - 3.2.2.4. If the contact was due to points 3.2.2.1 or 3.2.2.2, the "Complaints Officer" shall be redefined to be the Chair of Board of Trustees, or their delegate.
- 3.3. A complaint must include:
 - 3.3.1. An indication of it being a complaint;
 - 3.3.2. Details of the concern, including as much as possible;
 - 3.3.3. A timeframe of the concern;
 - 3.3.4. Any previous attempts to informally rectify the concern, if any;
 - 3.3.5. What remedy a complainant believes is appropriate;
 - 3.3.6. For a late complaint, the reason for a late complaint.
- 3.4. The JCR shall not accept complaints which are anonymous, malicious, or vexatious.
- 3.5. Complainants are expected to complain personally, and the Complaints Officer has the discretion to reject a complaint made on behalf of another party, or without probable clause.
- 3.6. In some cases, the JCR may be unable to assist complainants with procedural or pastoral support due to an organizational conflict of interest.

- 3.7. At formal stages of a complaint process, complainants and those complained about have the right to be accompanied to meetings by a supporter. Legal representation is not permitted.

4. STAGE I - INFORMAL DISCUSSION

- 4.1. The JCR welcomes the opportunity to discuss a complaint informally with the Complaints Officer, and with any concerned member, where possible.
- 4.2. The Complaints Officer has discretion to decide that a complaint is inappropriate to consider in an informal discussion, and may refer the matter straight to Stage 2.

5. STAGE II - FORMAL COMPLAINT

- 5.1. The Complaints Officer shall commence an investigation within 10 working days, in accordance with the following:
- 5.1.1. They shall offer an opportunity to the complainant to discuss their complaint in a face-to-face, or an online, interview, but is permitted to proceed with the investigation if one is not necessary.
 - 5.1.2. They may conduct further interviews, or request correspondence, from parties relevant to the complaint, all of whom are expected to fully cooperate.
 - 5.1.3. They shall determine findings of fact, consider mitigation, review relevant policies and procedures, and decide on the balance of probabilities whether the complaint should be upheld.
 - 5.1.4. A report should be prepared, including all evidence and statement gathered, over the course of the investigation, the relevant policies and procedures, the conclusion of the investigation, and a proposed remedy.
 - 5.1.5. If a complaint is upheld, they shall:
 - 5.1.5.1. Raise the issue under the Discipline Policy, should it be found an individual or group of individuals are involved, and a remedy can be issued.
 - 5.1.5.2. If an individual or group of individuals are involved but a remedy can't be found, a log of the complaint is required for future reference, for example a complaint on a contractor could be logged so in future, we do not use their services.
 - 5.1.5.3. For institutional complaints, seek where the problems were, and make propositions to fix it, if possible and feasible.
- 5.2. The JCR hopes that all complaints will be investigated and resolved at stage 2 within 28 working days. Complex complaints or exceptional circumstances may mean that this target is not met, but the investigator will communicate progress throughout the investigation.

6. STAGE III - COMPLAINT APPEALS

- 6.1. The complainant may only appeal if they have evidence of either procedural irregularity in the handling of the complaint, or new relevant evidence which could not reasonably be expected to have been available to the investigator during the initial investigation. For the avoidance of doubt, there are no grounds for appeal if the complainant disagrees with the outcome or disagrees with the recommendation of effective remedy.
- 6.2. The complainant should submit an appeal to the Complaints Officer within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint outcome, making clear the grounds for appeal.
- 6.3. The Complaints Officer shall appoint another member of the JCR Executive to consider the appeal, who will not reinvestigate the complaint, but will determine within 10 working days:
 - 6.3.1. Whether there is evidence of procedural irregularity, such that they may at their discretion request a new investigation.
 - 6.3.2. Whether new evidence, in their judgement, means that a different complaint outcome is probable, or a different recommendation of effective remedy is appropriate.
- 6.4. If an appeal is upheld, then the steps from section 5 shall take place, taking in the details of the appeal, the former complaint and its evidence, and any new evidence. They shall only refer the case to any Discipline Body who may handle appeals.

7. STAGE IV - INDEPENDENT REVIEW

- 7.1. If requested, the Complaints Officer shall appoint an independent person (the "Supervisor") to review complaints following an appeal. This shall be the Chair of Board of Trustees, or their delegate.
- 7.2. The Supervisor may be contacted directly, as per 3.2.2.
- 7.3. The Supervisor:
 - 7.3.1. Shall not undertake a new investigation;
 - 7.3.2. Shall review the investigation against the JCR Policies.

8. REPORTING

- 8.1. The Complaints Officer must maintain record of all complaints received and investigated using this procedure.
- 8.2. In line with the Discipline Policy, all evidence and notes shall be retained until the 31st of July at the later of: the following academic year after the case has been closed, or the following academic year after any remedies have been completed. An academic year shall run between the 1st of August and the 31st of July for the purposes of this policy.
- 8.3. The Complaints Officer is responsible for providing an annual report to the JCR Board of Trustees on complaints received under this procedure.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1. The Chair of the Board of Trustees, or their deputy, and the JCR President, will ensure that this policy is brought to the attention of all volunteers, employees, and contractors.
- 9.2. The Board of Trustees shall monitor the implementation of this policy.

10. APPROVAL AND REVIEW

- 10.1. This Discipline Policy was prepared in January 2026 by the JCR President, and amended by the Compliance and Governance Officer in July 2026.
- 10.2. This policy shall be reviewed year by the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the JCR President, and the JCR Executive Committee.

This Complaints Policy has been approved by the JCR President, and the Board of Trustees.

Signed **David Evans**
[Insert Signature Here]

Signed **Michael Cheung**
[Insert Signature Here]

Dated DD/MM/2026
Position **Chair, Board of Trustees**

Dated DD/MM/2026
Position **JCR President**

For implementation from the 1st of September 2026.