OAK HILL COLLEGE

Admissions Complaints Policy

Admissions Office: August 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 Oak Hill College is committed to the provision of fair, transparent and professional practices in the admission of students. We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when an applicant feels dissatisfied with the conduct of our admissions process or with its outcome.

1.2 The policy below explains how an applicant may complain about any aspect of the admissions process.

1.3 The College has developed this policy in accordance with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education and Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints) and the SPA Good Practice Statement: Applicant Complaints and Appeals. A related policy is the College's Admissions Policy which is available on the Oak Hill College website.

1.4 There is a separate complaints policy for current Oak Hill College students.

2. Definitions

2.1 For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions are used.

2.2 An **applicant** is any person who has submitted an application form to study at the College on a full or part time accredited programme and who has not yet started their programme.

2.3 A **complaint** is a specific concern related to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the College's admissions process. For example, an applicant may feel that they have not been treated courteously by a staff member, that they were given misleading information, or that there has been an unacceptable delay in the handling of their application.

2.4 The policy concerns the **admissions process** only. The admissions process is defined as procedures and decisions relating to the selection of candidates for entry to accredited programmes at the College.

3. General Principles

3.1 Most issues can be resolved informally without an applicant having to submit a formal complaint. We therefore encourage applicants to contact the Admissions Office promptly if they wish to discuss the reason for a particular decision or query any aspect of the handling of their application.

3.2 The College will ensure that complaints are treated seriously and handled in a way that is fair, efficient and sensitive to the concerns of applicants.

3.3 Complaints will be investigated with due regard to the confidentiality of all parties. It may be necessary to disclose information to other staff in order to investigate a complaint; in such circumstances, the parties concerned will be informed of such disclosure. Any staff member named in a complaint will be informed of the substance of the complaint and will have the right of reply as part of the process.

3.4 Submission of a complaint will not prejudice the College's opinion of the applicant or be used to adversely affect any later dealings the College has with the applicant (including any new applications made in future years, or any interactions with them as a student, should they subsequently enrol).

3.5 Complaints submitted by third parties without the explicit written permission of the applicant will not be considered. We must have written permission from the applicant to discuss their application with a third party. In the vast majority of cases it is the applicant rather than a third party who is best able to communicate any dissatisfaction with the College.

3.6 Anonymous complaints will not be considered under this procedure.

3.7 Grounds for a complaint may include (but are not limited to):

- The College did not follow its own Admissions Policy correctly;
- An error or omission in the conduct of the admissions process that materially affected the admissions decision;
- Concern regarding a member of staff's behaviour during the admissions process;
- The information provided by the College.

3.8 A complaint may not be based on:

- Failure on the applicant's part to complete their application form in full, including providing details of all qualifications achieved;
- An applicant's disagreement with or failure to fulfil the College's standard entry requirements (such as English language requirements);
- Disputing the academic judgement of College staff regarding the applicant's suitability for entry to a particular programme.

3.9 If a complaint is upheld, the College will take appropriate action to correct errors within a timely period.

3.10 The College ensures that staff working in recruitment, selection and admissions roles are familiar with this policy and their responsibilities under it.

4. Procedure

4.1 The College operates a three-stage process for applicant complaints. Where possible, we prefer to resolve complaints informally in the first instance.

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

4.2 If an applicant has a concern regarding a procedural error or irregularity or feels they have been treated inappropriately during the admissions process they are encouraged to initially raise the matter with the Admissions Office via admissions@oakhill.ac.uk. This gives the Admissions Office the opportunity to, as appropriate, provide feedback, explain procedures or allay concerns and agree a satisfactory resolution with the applicant.

4.3 Concerns should be raised no more than 28 days after the event or action, unless there is good reason for the delay. The Admissions Office will acknowledge receipt of the applicant's email within 5 working days and respond within 15 working days.

4.4 If this informal stage does not resolve the matter and the applicant remains dissatisfied, the applicant may then follow the formal complaints procedure (Stage 2).

Stage 2 – Formal resolution

4.5 Where informal resolution is not reached, a formal complaint should be submitted to the Director of Operations and Finance using the Admissions Complaints Form (which can be found at the end of this document). The Director of Operations and Finance will have had no prior decision-making role in the case and will therefore review all cases impartially.

4.6 If, in the unlikely event, the Director of Operations and Finance has had any involvement in the decision-making process as part of the Leadership Team, the matter can be referred to the Kingham Hill Secretary at secretary@khtrust.org.uk. The Trust Secretary will then follow the same process as the Director of Operations and Finance, as detailed below.

4.7 Complaints should be submitted within 28 days of the issue which is being complained about or the last date of College communication about the issue, whichever is later. The following information should be included with the submission:

- The nature of, and reasons for, the complaint, giving as much detail as possible;
- Any steps the applicant has already taken to resolve the matter;
- Details of any response the applicant has received to date and a statement as to why the response is unsatisfactory;
- An indication of the outcome being sought.

4.8 The Director of Operations and Finance will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days.

4.9 The Director of Operations and Finance will lead an investigation to determine the merits of the complaint, with input from the Admissions Office or other parts of the College as appropriate. As part of the investigation, the Director of Operations and Finance may request additional information from the applicant.

4.10 A response will be provided in writing within 15 working days of receipt of the Admissions Complaints Form. If, for any reason, it should prove impossible to review the case and respond fully within 15 working days, the Director of Operations and Finance will write to inform the applicant of the progress being made in consideration of the complaint and timescale for a full response.

4.11 The possible outcomes of the investigation are:

- The Director of Operations and Finance may uphold the complaint and take appropriate action to correct errors and/or provide appropriate redress.
- The Director of Operations and Finance may reject the complaint and will communicate the reasons for this decision.

4.12 Reasonable action resulting from a complaint which is upheld could, for example, include an apology, an undertaking to revise procedures, or looking again at a specific admissions decision.

4.13 A review of an admissions decision by the College will not necessarily change that decision. Where such a review reverses an admissions decision, the College may not be able to guarantee admission in the academic year the applicant initially applied for.

4.14 If the applicant remains dissatisfied once the College's informal and formal procedures are exhausted, they will be informed of their right to request a review by Durham University (Stage 3).

Stage 3 – Review by Durham University

4.15 Once the College's informal and formal procedures are exhausted, an applicant has the right to refer admissions complaints to Durham University. They may ask Durham University to review the complaint by contacting the Common Awards Team on common.awards@durham.ac.uk.

4.16 The University will determine whether to review the admissions complaint to ascertain whether Oak Hill's admissions policy and processes have been implemented correctly.

4.17 If procedural irregularities are identified, the complaint may be referred back to Oak Hill for further review.

4.18 As the remit of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) does not apply to applicants, there is no recourse to the OIA following this process. However, an applicant who is not satisfied after exhausting the

College's three-stage process may be able to take the matter to local authority Trading Standards Services or the Competition and Markets Authority.

5. Retention of Records

5.1 A record of an individual complaint will be retained by the Director of Operations and Finance for as long as a dispute may persist. The information will be stored and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the College's Student Enquirers Privacy Notice.

5.2 The case file relating to an individual complaint will not form part of any subsequent student record.

5.3 The Director of Operations and Finance will be responsible for ensuring a case file is destroyed one calendar year following conclusion of the complaint.

5.4 The College will carry out an annual review of the number, type and outcomes of complaints to help improve the admissions process for future applicants. No personal data will be used in this analysis.

6. Contact Information

Informal resolution:
Admissions Office
admissions@oakhill.ac.uk

Formal resolution:
Helen Archer-Smith
Director of Operations and Finance
Oak Hill College
Chase Side
London
N14 4PS
helena-s@oakhill.ac.uk

Review by Durham University:
Common Awards Team
common.awards@durham.ac.uk

Competition and Markets Authority:
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority

7. Document Control

Author	Admissions Manager
Approved	Director of Operations and Finance
Date approved by Oak Hill	30/07/26
Next review	July 2027

Admissions Complaints Form

This form is only for the submission of a formal complaint in accordance with Oak Hill College's Admissions Complaints Policy, which can be found in the 'policies' section of the College website. Please read this policy before submitting the form as we may be unable to consider an inappropriate or incomplete submission.

If you have any queries concerning the completion or submission of this form, please contact the Director of Operations and Finance on helena-s@oakhill.ac.uk.

The form and any supporting documentation should be submitted to the Director of Operations and Finance at the following address: Director of Operations and Finance, Oak Hill College, Chase Side, London N14 4PS. Alternatively the form and any supporting documentation may be emailed to helena-s@oakhill.ac.uk.

1. Personal details

This section is for the personal and contact details of the person making the complaint

Title:	First name:	Surname:
Address:		
Email address:		Phone number:

2. Applicant information

This section is for the details of the applicant concerned in the complaint. If the person submitting the complaint is not the same as the applicant, please note that we will be unable to process the case without written evidence of the applicant's full consent. ***The applicant will also need to sign this form.***

Title:	First name:	Surname:
Programme applied for:		
Mode of study applied for:		

Please select one of the following:

- ☐ I am the applicant concerned in this complaint
- ☐ I am not the applicant concerned in this complaint, but have attached their written consent

3. Details of complaint

Please provide details of your complaint.

4. Enclosures

Are you enclosing any additional documentation? Yes / No

If **yes**, please list the documents attached.

5. Previous action

Have you already discussed the complaint informally with a member of College staff? Yes / No

If **yes**, please provide details.

6. Desired resolution

If you have any specific resolution in mind, please indicate your desired outcome(s) below. Please note any expression of preferred outcome will not prejudice the College's consideration of your complaint.

7. Declaration

I confirm that the above details and any attached documentation is a true reflection of events to the best of my knowledge and that it does not contain any false or fraudulent information.

I agree to the investigating officer on behalf of Oak Hill College sharing details of this case, including information from my application, with other persons as part of any investigation and to retain a record of that investigation, in accordance with Oak Hill College's Admissions Complaints Policy.

Applicant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of person making the complaint (if not the applicant): _____ Date: _____