

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (Appendix 1)

This procedure supports the RMET's Complaints Policy. Please refer to the policy for definitions and further detail.

### RECEIPT AND LOGGING

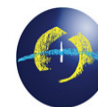
- A complaint is received verbally or in writing.
- Determine whether the individual needs support to assist them in pursuing the complaint. If the individual is a student, support will normally be provided or secured by the Student Journey Manager, Houseparent/Homeprovider or Residential Support Worker.
- Communicate the details of the complaint to the designated College Administrator or Executive Services Manager (for corporate issues) who will ensure that the complaint is logged onto the complaints log and that the Principal or Chief Executive is informed.

- Ensure that the following details are captured:

Name of the person reporting the complaint, contact details, preferred means of contact, name of student (where required), date, nature of the matter, including effect on them/the student, any suggestions for putting things right, whether the individual has contacted RMET before about this issue.

### INVESTIGATION

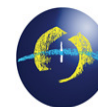
- All formal complaints relating to college matters should be passed to the appropriate College Principal. All complaints relating to corporate matters should be passed to the Chief Executive.
- The person receiving the complaint should advise the individual of the next steps in the process.
- If the matter needs to be dealt with immediately and urgently, the person accepting the complaint should ensure that the details are passed to the Principal or Chief Executive without delay.
- If the matter does not require immediate action, the person logging the complaint should ensure that the details are passed on to the Principal or Chief Executive as soon as possible.



- The Principal or Chief Executive will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged in writing (posted by recorded delivery) within **5 working days** of receiving the complaint and to explain the complaints procedure using the standard letter.
- The College Principal or Chief Executive may choose to appoint another member of staff to investigate the complaint.
- The member of staff appointed to investigate the complaint will contact the person who has made the complaint **within 5 working days** after the letter of acknowledgment has been posted in order to arrange a meeting or telephone conversation to discuss the complaint in more detail.
- The complaint should be investigated as swiftly as possible and ideally **within 5 weeks of posting the acknowledgment**. If there are likely to be delays in resolving the matter, the individual must be informed, together with a timescale for resolution.
- If the complaint cannot be dealt with within 5 weeks, the Complaints log should be updated with a revised anticipated resolution date.
- If it becomes clear that a complaint is likely to become a significant issue (e.g. legal involvement, adverse PR consequences) the relevant College Principal and Chief Executive should be informed. Advice on wording of response letters can be sought from the Head of Marketing and Communications.

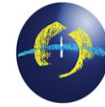
## RESOLUTION

- When the investigation has been completed, the individual should be advised in writing of the outcome, invited to contact the investigator in case of query and advised that if they are not satisfied with the way in which the complaint was handled, that they can contact the College Principal or Chief Executive. They must also be reminded that they can contact the LSC, CSCI or Charity Commission, but that the RMET complaints procedure should be fully exhausted before escalating the complaint further. All complaints made to College Principals or the Chief Executive at this stage should be in writing, unless to do so could be considered to be discriminatory on equality grounds (use the standard resolution letter).
- Students making complaints should be advised that if they are not satisfied with the outcome, they may request that the Trust contacts

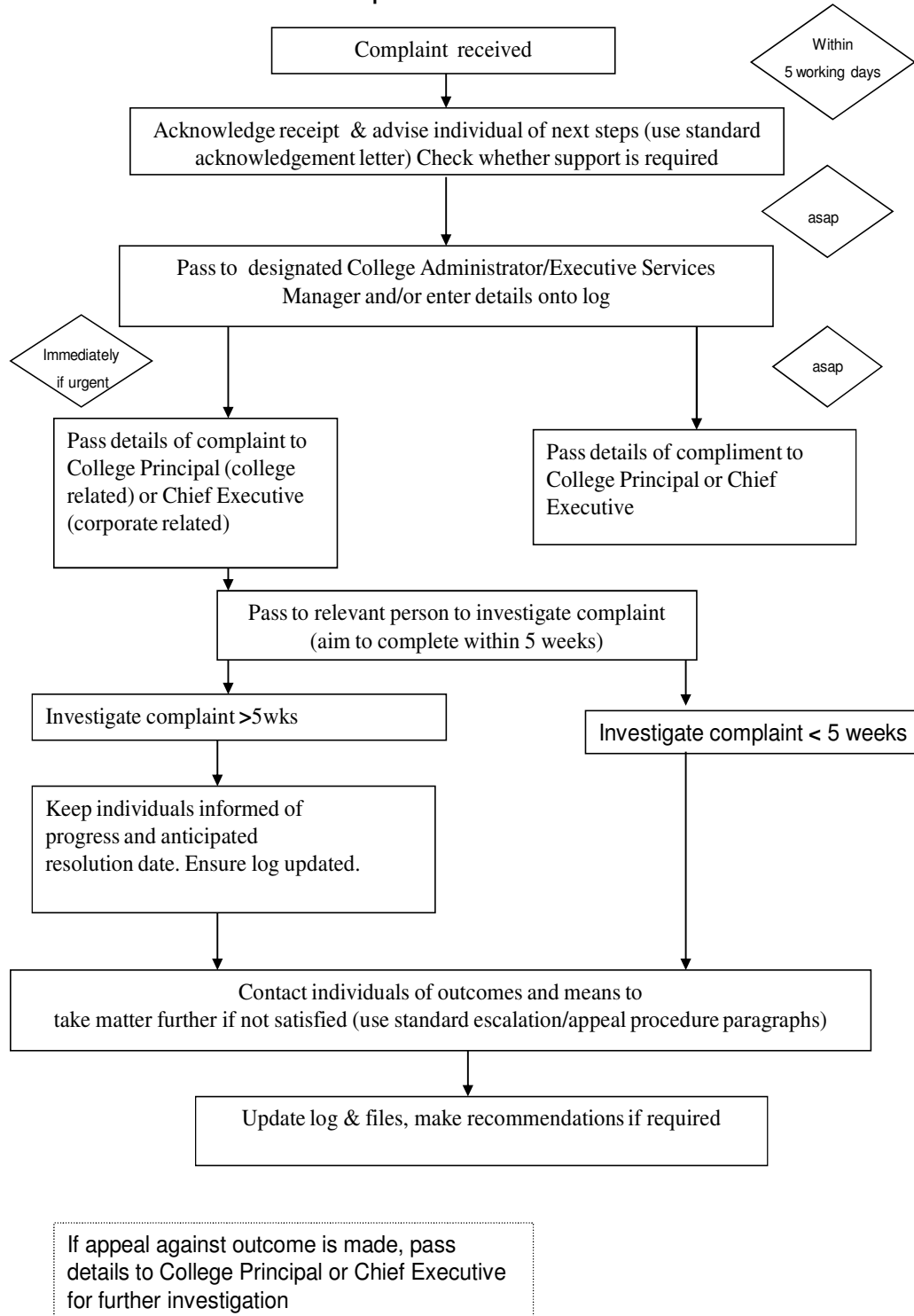


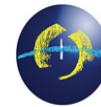
their home area Social Service Department or referring agency and (if the student wishes), his or her parents/carers, detailing the complaint and the action taken to date. A meeting will then be arranged with the outside parties to resolve the matter.

- Where a complaint has been appealed and thereby escalated to the College Principal or the Chief Executive, arrangements must be made for the matter to be reinvestigated. The decision letter will state that, subject to rights to complain to external bodies, the decision of the College Principal or Chief Executive is a final decision.
- When the matter is resolved or the file closed, the log should be updated. Where the investigation reveals a need for further actions to be taken by RMET (e.g. changing a policy or operational details), recommendations should be noted on the log and sent to the College Principal and Chief Executive.
- Thorough notes should be kept of the investigation, including details of emails and conversations. Files should remain with the investigator during the course of the investigation and filed on the complaints file (held by a designated college Administrator or the Executive Services Manager) when completed. Any complaints involving students should be copied to their student files.



### RMET Complaints Procedure Flow Chart

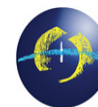




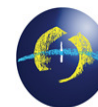
## Appendix 2

### GOOD INVESTIGATORY PRACTICE

1. The investigator should check the log and files to determine whether previous complaints have been made about the matter in question or by the person involved.
2. Following acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint, or at the same time, the investigator should contact the individual to arrange a meeting or telephone conversation in order to discuss the complaint in more detail. This will include:
  - Clarifying the details of the complaint, including checking understanding of its nature
  - Clarifying the individual's requirements for an acceptable outcome
  - Checking whether the individual needs support of any kind
  - Explaining the investigation procedure
3. The investigator should brief themselves on the relevant legal, policy and procedural background to the complaint.
4. Establish the sequence of events, names of staff and others directly involved and obtain copies of log book notes, correspondence etc.
5. Carry out interviews with those involved where necessary. Staff and students both have a right to be accompanied to such a meeting by someone not acting in a legal capacity.
6. If at any time the investigator believes that the complaint may lead to allegations of wrong doing or abuse, the complaint should be discussed with the College Principal or Chief Executive and the Human Resources Manager in order that the correct procedures can be followed.
7. At the end of the interview, summarise the main points and ask whether the interviewee has anything to add. Explain the next stages in the process.
8. Ensure that all who are involved are kept informed of progress.
9. Ensure that all necessary documentation is stored securely.



10. Ensure that accurate notes of progress, including actions, notes of face to face or telephone conversations and emails are stored. Individuals have rights to view information held about them and it is therefore vital that records are accurate and factual and do not include hearsay or opinion, unless the person giving the opinion is qualified to do so.
11. Seek guidance from a senior member of staff at any time should there be any concerns about the process, the nature of the matter, whether there may be legal or welfare implications etc.



### Appendix 3

#### FORMS AND POLICY EXTRACTS

Doc	Document Name	Storage location
1	College complaint log	College folders
2	Corporate complaint log	RMET Information folder - Complaints and Compliments
3	Complaint Report form	RMET Information folder - Complaints
4	Public (short) version of the Complaints Policy - Guide to making a complaint	RMET Information folder - Complaints, website and hard copies
5	Student (short) version of the Complaints Policy	RMET Information folder - Complaints, website and hard copies
6	Standard acknowledgement letter	RMET Information folder - Complaints
7	Standard paragraphs for resolution letter (relates to escalation procedure)	RMET Information folder - Complaints
8	Guidance for carrying out interviews	Appendix 2 in Complaints Procedure
10	Occurrence form	College folders
11	Confidentiality Policy	Student Protection Policies
12	Other sources: Dignity at Work Policy, Data Protection Policy, Procedure for reporting a wrong doing, Grievance Procedure, Capability Procedure	RMET Staff Handbook

Issued: January 2010