

Ruskin Mill Educational Trust

Student Protection Policies

January 2006

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1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO POLICIES

RMET is committed to providing an environment in which the students are encouraged to learn and develop as individuals within a safe setting. As a consequence staff are always encouraged to follow safe working practices. Good working practices are expected at all times. Poor practice will always be addressed and abuse of any description will not be tolerated. The policies contained within this part of the handbook detail established procedures to enable staff to work to the best of their ability and to allow RMET to deal quickly and effectively with poor practice and any issue of potential or actual abuse, with minimum harm to the student.

RMET recognises that the systems for dealing with under-18 years old and those 18 and over often vary considerably but both groups of students will be treated with the same level of respect and protection within the college environment and the wider RMET community.

In setting up its policies and procedures RMET has had regard to the following:

- In every instance when determining appropriate action the focus should be on the student concerned, and their best interests should be the over riding consideration. The student's interests should be assessed separately from those of staff, parents or other caregivers, although every effort will be made to develop effective partnerships.
- RMET will give its utmost assistance to Local Authority Social Services Departments to enable them to carry out their statutory responsibilities to students placed at RMET.
- RMET will always co-operate with professionals from other agencies as necessary in accordance with guidance issued by the Department of Health.
- Whilst RMET staff and volunteers will be guided by the principles of partnership with parents and the operation of natural justice, such an approach will not detract from the fundamental objective of protecting the students by means jointly determined with the investigating authority. If, to RMET, the issues relating to policies and procedures appear unresolved, RMET may take further action as required.
- Although it will not be appropriate for a representative of RMET to be appointed as the main worker in investigations of poor practice or abuse, or during subsequent follow-up, the specialist knowledge and skills of an RMET staff member may be made available to the lead agent to help a student with disability and/or other members of the family.
- A student's cultural and religious values must be recognized and respected at all times, as will the confidentiality of staff, students and outside agencies.

All policies will be reviewed in January 2007.

For further information on this section of RMET policies and procedures please contact the Head of College at Ruskin Mill College, Glasshouse College or Freeman College.

2. SUMMARY OF THE STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

It is essential that RMET staff and volunteers know what decisions they can make themselves and what decisions must be referred to a more senior member of staff. Key contacts are identified below.

The procedures laid out in the accompanying flow chart detail the way in which referrals of concerns must be made, the way work will be conducted at each stage (including the collection and recording of relevant information) and the key actions to be taken. This is to ensure that student protection issues are brought to the attention of Neighbourhood Heads and staff with the appropriate experience, knowledge and authority to take decisions relating to student protection issues.

RMET acknowledges that:

- The welfare of the student is paramount
- All students, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All staff and members of the public have the potential to abuse students in some way
- All staff and volunteers working in RMET have a responsibility to report concerns relating to student abuse and harm to the Neighbourhood Head or Student Protection Worker

And undertakes that:

- All students in the care of RMET will be provided with appropriate safety and protection
- All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with students
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff and volunteers will be given appropriate education and training to make informed and confident responses to specific student protection issues

KEY CONTACTS

STUDENT PROTECTION WORKERS

Ruskin Mill College

Richard Rogers - 01453 837528

Briony Thursfield - 01453 837536

Glasshouse College

Bernard Feehan - 01384 399443

Nigel Moss - 01384 399441

Freeman College

John Pickin - 0114 2965521

Amanda Labron - 0114 2965522

SOCIAL SERVICE AND OTHER CONTACTS

Ruskin Mill College

Gloucestershire Social Services

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Under 19 | 01452 426565 |
| Adult Protection Unit (over 19) | 01452 425109 / 425157 |
| Police | 0845 090 1234 |
| Commission for Social Care Inspection | 01452 632750 |

Glasshouse College

Dudley Social Services (Stourbridge)

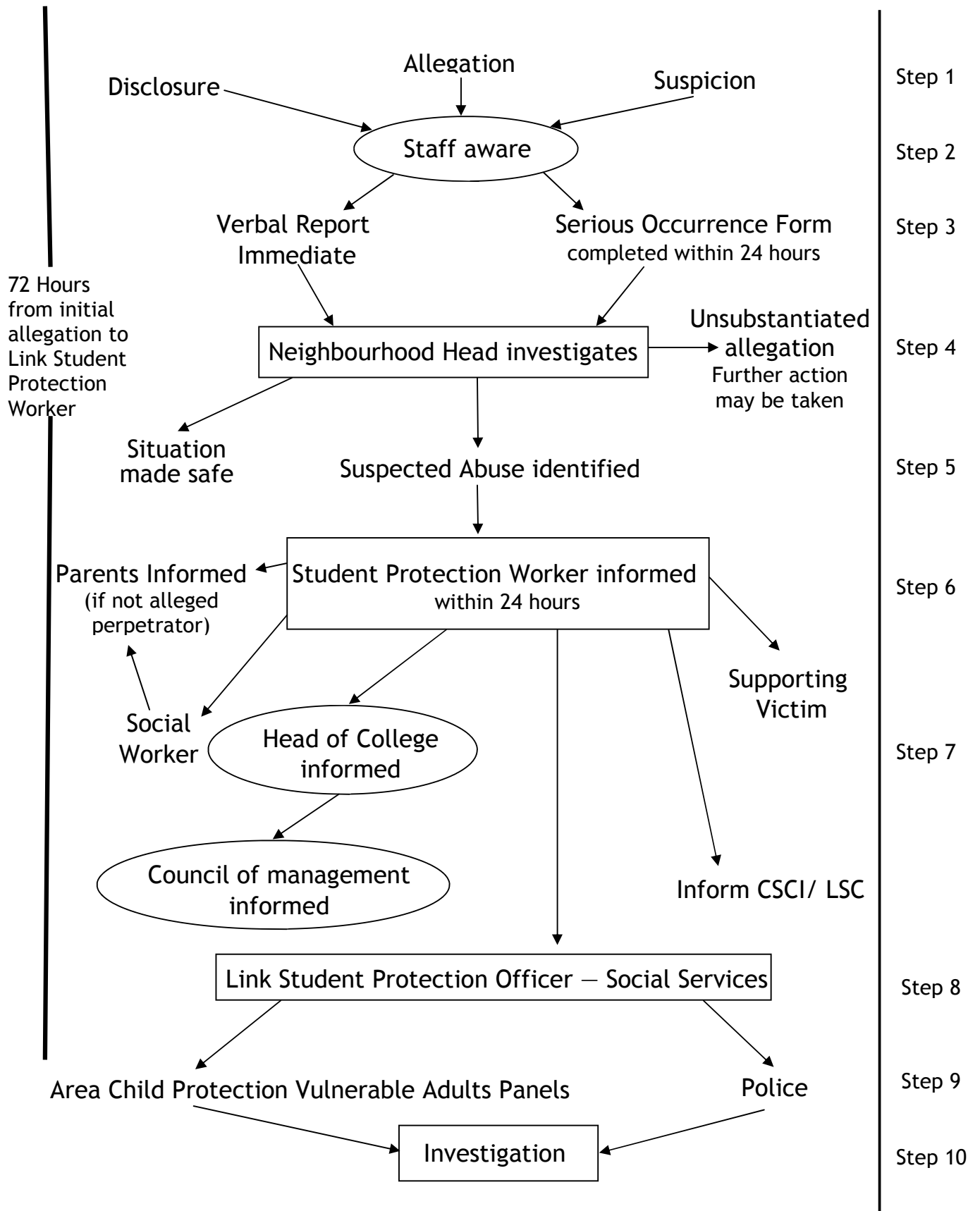
| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Under 19 | 01384 456111 ask for Duty SW |
| Police | 0121 626 8127 |
| Commission for Social Care Inspection | 0121 423 5410 |

Freeman College

Sheffield Social Services

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Child/family duty social worker | 0114 273 4855 |
| Adult Services Access Team | 0114 273 4908 |
| Emergency Duty Team | 0114 273 4446 |
| Police | 0114 220 2020 |
| Commission for Social Care Inspection | 0114 256 4530 |

The flow chart below indicates the procedure and time spans for informing RMET about an alleged incident of harm or abuse.



3. STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

- 3.1 Background to the Policy
- 3.2 Introduction to the RMET Student Protection Policy
- 3.3 Procedures and systems
- 3.4 Codes of practice and behaviour
- 3.5 Key summary

3.1 BACKGROUND TO THE POLICY

- 3.1.1 Introducing RMET and the scope of the policy
- 3.1.2 Student protection and policy statement
- 3.1.3 Policy aims
- 3.1.4 Who the policy is for
- 3.1.5 Legislative background
- 3.1.6 Policy approved by RMET Council of Management

3.1.1 INTRODUCING THE RMET AND THE SCOPE OF THE POLICY.

Ruskin Mill Educational Trust (RMET) provides an innovative and experiential education for young people aged 16 (15 on assessment) - 25 with special learning needs. RMET operates three Colleges; Ruskin Mill College, which is located at Nailsworth in Gloucestershire; the Glasshouse College, located at Stourbridge in the West Midlands and Freeman College in Sheffield, South Yorkshire. Residential accommodation includes the following range of provision:

- RMET household where up to four students live together with houseparents
- Residential Support Worker household, where up to four students are cared for and supported by a team of support staff
- Supported living household, where students live in a RMET household and receive background live-in support
- Homeprovider household, where a student will board with homeproviders who have a close connection to RMET
- Training flats with external support.

RMET places a small number of students within contracted accommodation, not directly connected with RMET, through ownership or staffing. The use of RMET in this document therefore signifies these three Colleges and the residential accommodation provided by RMET, those employed by RMET or those contracted by RMET.

3.1.2 STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

This policy exists to protect all students within RMET. A student under the age of 18 is defined as a child (Children Act 1989). An adult is defined as any person aged 18 or over.

RMET recognises the vulnerability of students placed at RMET and the rights of all students to protection from emotional, physical and sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation by others, including other students. RMET has a duty of care to all students involved in studying, working or living in RMET. Through adhering to student protection guidelines RMET will ensure the safety and protection of all students placed within RMET.

3.1.3 POLICY AIMS

The aim of the Student Protection Policy is to promote good practice through:

- Providing students with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of RMET
- Allowing and enabling all paid and unpaid staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific student protection issues

3.1.4 WHO THE POLICY IS FOR

This policy is to be followed by:

- All staff working for RMET, whether in paid, unpaid or voluntary roles
- All visiting professionals

This policy DOES NOT cover members of the public as visitors to RMET.

3.1.5 THE STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

- Children Act (1989)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Department of Health. (1999)
- A Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families. Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment, Home Office. (2000)
- Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) (2004) - Through referrals to, and checks against the POVA list, care workers who have harmed a vulnerable adult, or placed a vulnerable adult at risk of harm, (whether or not in the course of their employment) will be banned from working in a care position with vulnerable adults. It covers both England and Wales, and refers to the care of vulnerable adults aged 18 years or over.
- Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)
- No Secrets: Department of Health (2000)
- Children's Homes Regulations: Department of Health (2000/1/2)
- Care Standards Act: Department of Health (2000)
- Safe from Harm and Every Child Matters: Department of Health (2003):

3.1.6 POLICY APPROVED BY

This policy was been approved for implementation by the RMET Council of Management on behalf of the Board of Trustees of RMET on 1st October 2005. It is the expectation of the Council of Management that all paid or unpaid staff and volunteers whether directly or indirectly working with RMET when having concerns about a student's welfare or safety will follow these procedures at all times.

3.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE RMET STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

3.2.1 Responsibility of RMET

3.2.2 Students “in need” or as a “vulnerable adult”

3.2.3 Collective responsibility - RMET and harm and abuse

3.2.4 Individual responsibility

3.2.5 Confidentiality

3.2.1 RESPONSIBILITY OF RMET

RMET is committed to providing a safe and secure environment in which students are encouraged to learn and develop as individuals.

All students deserve the opportunity to achieve their potential. They should be enabled to:

- Be as physically and mentally healthy as possible
- Gain the maximum benefit possible from good-quality educational opportunities
- Live in a safe environment and be protected from harm
- Experience emotional well-being
- Feel valued and cared for
- Become competent in looking after themselves and coping with everyday living
- Have a positive image of themselves, and a secure sense of identity
- Develop good inter-personal skills and confidence in social situations

3.2.2 RMET AND STUDENTS “IN NEED” OR AS A “VULNERABLE ADULT”

Students as children or as adults may be seen as “in need” or “vulnerable.”

Some students under the age of 18 are described in the Children’s Act 1989 (Section 17(10)) as being “in need”.

“In need” is defined as:

Having particular needs because they are disabled, or because they need certain services in order to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, or to prevent their development being impaired

Some students aged 18 or over may be described as a “vulnerable adult” (section 80(6)) Protection of Vulnerable Adults Scheme 2004.

“Vulnerable adult” is defined as

An adult to whom accommodation and nursing or personal care are provided in a care home; or

An adult to whom personal care is provided in their own home under arrangements made by a domiciliary care agency

3.2.3 COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES - RMET AND HARM AND ABUSE

RMET recognises that all students, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from harm and abuse.

All students whether “in need” as children, or “vulnerable” as adults may also be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm or abuse. Harm may be attributable to:

- Ill treatment, which may include sexual, physical or emotional abuse or
- The impairment of physical or mental health or
- The impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional or behavioural development

RMET recognises harm as:

- Ill treatment or the impairment of health in relation to a student aged 18 or over who is not mentally impaired
- Ill treatment or the impairment of health or development in relation to a student aged 18 or over who is mentally impaired, or any student under 18

RMET recognises abuse as constituting physical, emotional, sexual harm and neglect.

This may be as a result of:

- A deliberate act by a parent, carer or other adult or student
- A failure to act or provide proper care, or
- Both of these

RMET also recognises that definitions of harm and abuse will vary over time and between cultures and are subject to differing interpretations. This is discussed in detail in the codes of practice and behaviour (section 4).

Harm and abuse of any description will not be tolerated and it is the policy of RMET to invoke the procedures laid out in this policy if concerns relating to student protection are raised. RMET recognises some variation between the systems protecting students under 18, and those for protecting students aged 18 or over as vulnerable adults, but both groups of students will be treated with the same level of respect and protection within the college environment. In setting up such procedures RMET will ensure that they will always be alert to, and know how to respond quickly and decisively to potential indicators of abuse and neglect.

3.2.4 INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers working within RMET:

- To read and sign the ‘Student Protection Policy and associated summary.’
- To report all concerns of harm and abuse involving students to the Neighbourhood Head
- To co-operate with RMET Management in all matters relating to student harm and abuse
- To abide by and implement at all times RMET’s Mission Statement, values, principles and procedures in the interests of the student; and maintain high professional standards in attitude and service
- To maintain all records and house logs as required
- To promote the safety, care and well-being, of the student at all times
- To be efficient and conscientious in the recording, sharing (as appropriate) and storage of information in the interests of the student and of RMET

- To the best of their ability, to protect students both in the immediate RMET community and environs, and the Nailsworth/Stroud, Stourbridge and Sheffield communities
- To maintain a welcoming, co-operative attitude to the parent(s), families and associated professionals of the students, and encourage their participation and involvement wherever possible, and to facilitate open, relevant communication with them
- To submit to all checking and verification procedures used by RMET including the provision of personal and professional references and Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) and Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) checks

3.2.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

RMET's policy on confidentiality covers all sites. RMET requires all staff to share information about students and Colleagues with discretion, sensitivity and respect. All staff are required to familiarise themselves with the full Confidentiality Policy operated by RMET.

The following section summarises the key areas of the confidentiality policy relevant to protecting students from harm and abuse.

Introduction

RMET operates within a system of 'extended confidentiality' to ensure safe and best practice for the wellbeing of students to whom they owe a responsibility. RMET sees the guiding principle for information sharing within the organisation as being centred on a 'need to know' basis. Good practice is viewed as a shared responsibility. The College regards this as a particularly effective approach to providing the best possible service to students who have highly complex emotional, behavioural, communication and educational needs.

RMET recognises that its students have a right to have information about them kept confidential, and that this is essential for maintaining their trust in the organisation and hence essential for running the service. All students must be informed of this confidentiality policy, and efforts should be made to establish that they understand it. When students are informed about the policy, they should be informed of their rights to make a formal complaint should they believe their confidentiality has been breached.

Possible abuse of vulnerable young people always demands urgent action. In any situation where a student makes a disclosure of any form of abuse, (or is thought to have suffered any form of abuse) there is an established protocol and system of line management detailed in this policy which staff must adhere to, to ensure that appropriate procedures can be implemented. Investigation of disclosure or allegations of emotional, physical, sexual or financial abuse may result in student protection procedures involving social services, health services, education, police and other services.

With regards to student protection RMET wishes to make it clear that; "staff should not make promises which cannot be kept to a student and in the light of possible court proceedings should not promise ... that what is said in confidence can be kept in confidence." Furthermore the student must be made aware of this approach from the outset of any disclosure. However, in an attempt to maintain appropriate duty of confidentiality towards the student, (and any other individual against whom an allegation may be made) staff members are required to limit discussion of disclosure

or suspicion of abuse to their immediate line managers (Neighbourhood Heads, and/or Heads of College) for the purpose of appropriate information gathering.

Information sharing from this point will be made on a restricted, strictly 'need to know' basis and often will include people from external agencies. This is to ensure that the student is supported and advised by professionals who are expert in the field of abuse. This approach also ensures that important evidence is not contaminated and that the precise, factual details are recorded in a manner that is appropriate to any ongoing investigation.

As a condition of employment in RMET paid and unpaid staff who breach confidence may be dismissed. Volunteers who breach confidence may be asked to leave. The RMET policy on confidentiality is binding for paid employees and volunteers including management and trustees

3.3 PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS

- 3.3.1 Definitions of sexual abuse
- 3.3.2 Definition of emotional abuse
- 3.3.3 Definition of physical abuse
- 3.3.4 Definition of neglect
- 3.3.5 Prostitution
- 3.3.6 Recognising signs of abuse
- 3.3.7 Sexual abuse indicators
- 3.3.8 Physical abuse indicators
- 3.3.9 Emotional abuse and neglect indicators

3.3.1 DEFINITION OF SEXUAL ABUSE

The age of sexual consent for heterosexual and homosexual relationships is 16. However, whilst all sex before this age is regarded as illegal, such sexual relations do not necessarily fall into the definition of abuse. That is they may be consensual between young people of the same or similar age, of similar levels of functioning maturity.

Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of dependant, developmentally immature children and young people under the age of 18 in (or exposure to) sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent and/or which violate social taboos of family life. Students aged 18 and over may also be at risk of sexual abuse if they are unable to give informed consent to sexual activities or are the victims of sexual assault.

In circumstances where a young person is believed to be engaging in an active consensual, non abusive relationship it should nevertheless be reported to the Student Protection Worker who will make a decision based upon the best interests and welfare of the students concerned. There are clear procedures for dealing with allegations and disclosures in line with Standard 17.3 the National Minimum Standards (Children's Home Regulations 2000). The flow chart (section 5) with a key summary of the policy details these procedures and is available to all members of staff to assist them to take appropriate action in the appropriate order.

The age of consenting sexual relationships between carers, teachers and adults with professional responsibility for young people and young people formerly in their care is 18 years. Any sexual relationship between any employee of RMET and any current or former student under the age of 18 is illegal and will be treated as a serious student protection issue. Any sexual relationship between an employee of RMET and any former student over 18 years old whom they have cared for is regarded as wholly inappropriate and unprofessional, and is therefore strongly discouraged.

Any sexual relationship between an employee of RMET and any current student is not only regarded as inappropriate and unprofessional, but also gross misconduct and will lead to dismissal.

Ultimately the responsible body for deciding as to whether further action is required is the Area Child Protection Team, Social Services and the Police.

3.3.2 DEFINITION OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is defined as persistent or severe emotional ill treatment which has a severe effect on behaviour and/or development, and which persistently undermines self-regard and self-esteem. There will be an element of emotional abuse in all types of abuse. However, even in the absence of indications of other types of abuse, emotional abuse alone can warrant intervention.

Bullying can also be defined as Emotional Abuse and RMET staff and volunteers are encouraged to read the RMET Anti-Bullying Policy.

3.3.3 DEFINITION OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is defined as physical injury caused by deliberate action or action in which the perpetrator was reckless as to its effect. The following outlines specific examples,

- Hitting (with or without an implement)
At present, British law allows parents physically to reprimand/discipline their children. There is no specific definition of 'excessive force' (which is regarded as abuse). Rather, precedent in the interpretation of 'The Offences Against the Person Act' applies. No member of staff or volunteer may use physical discipline in any circumstances. If any physical reprimand by staff, parents or others on any student in the care of RMET is witnessed a Serious Occurrence Form must be completed and passed to the Neighbourhood Head. The Student Protection Worker must also be notified.
- Scalding and burning both with specific implements and/or coercing the student into overheated water.
- Restrictions of liberty such as 'tying up' or forced imprisonment
- Poisoning, starvation, withholding of essential health care (this can also be covered by neglect)
- Unwanted holding (but not so as to avoid danger) and inappropriate physical restraint

The appropriate use of holding and physical restraint to manage challenging students is discussed in the RMET Policy on the Management of Challenging Behaviour. Staff must familiarise themselves with this policy.

Where the nature of any physical injury is not consistent with the account given by the student of how it occurred; or where there is knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a person having care of a student has inflicted (or knowingly failed to prevent) the injury, Student Protection procedures must be initiated. This includes suspicion of deliberate poisoning

3.3.4 DEFINITION OF NEGLECT

Neglect is defined as situations in which students have been persistently or severely neglected physically to such an extent that their health or development becomes impaired. A failure to provide the following within RMET may constitute neglect.

- sufficient shelter
- sufficient food
- assistance to students in maintaining personal hygiene
- necessary and risk assessed safety precautions
- reasonable supervision within and outside the residential home

An absence or lack of the following may also constitute neglect:

- Appropriate warmth
- Appropriate clothing
- Supervision
- Stimulation
- Access to medical care
- An opportunity to receive appropriate education

3.3.5 PROSTITUTION

Any student becoming involved in prostitution whether or not they are under the age of 16, and whether or not it is believed to be consensual is regarded as a victim of sexual exploitation as per standard 17.3 of the National Minimum Care Standards Act (Children's Homes Regulations. 2001). There is a requirement to report to a Neighbourhood Head any evidence that a student is becoming involved in prostitution, or of unauthorised persons picking a student up, contacting students in the home or observed trying to make contact with students outside the home.

3.3.6 RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

Staff must report all suspicions of abuse or of any physical injury on a Serious Occurrence Form to their Neighbourhood Head or in their absence the Student Protection Worker. Abuse may take place at RMET, within RMET accommodation or when students have contact with family and friends away from RMET.

Staff should be aware of physical symptoms, behavioural and emotional changes that MAY indicate abuse.

Listed below are some of the more common signs which indicate that abuse MAY be occurring or has occurred in the past. This list is not comprehensive and should not be considered as an alternative to good training. These indicators in themselves do not provide definite proof of abuse but it is necessary that staff know the common signs in order to be alert to the possibilities. Whilst some of these indicators would not be observed by staff in the normal course of their work, staff should nevertheless be aware of them.

3.3.7 SEXUAL ABUSE INDICATORS

Indications of sexual abuse are often difficult to ascertain. Staff must therefore be careful before jumping to conclusions. Nevertheless, any the following should raise concern and would warrant action.

- Bruises, scratches, and other minor injuries, particularly to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs not consistent with accidental injury.
- Itching, soreness, discharge, unexplained bleeding, sexually transmitted diseases, pain on passing urine, recurrent urinary tract infections
- Sperm or other bodily fluids on vagina, rectum or genitalia and/or clothing and skin
- Difficulty in sitting, walking or complaints about pelvic pain
- Pregnancy where the identity of the father is a secret
- Psychosomatic complaints such as recurrent abdominal pain, severe headaches and sleeplessness

The more indicators present, the greater the probability that the student has been exposed to abuse. Although some of the above physical signs are usually only observable during an intimate medical examination some may be observed when providing intimate personal care (though intimate personal care should never be provided as a pretence to observe possible physical signs or physical abuse).

On no account should staff ever attempt any intimate physical examination.

The causes of disturbed behaviour and emotional distress are often difficult to pinpoint, particularly as other factors (such as disturbed family background) can cause similar presentation to that of sexual abuse. Nevertheless, the presence of the following may indicate the need for further assessment. This is particularly crucial if changes in normal behaviour are observed.

- Sudden mood changes
- Regressive behaviour such as bedwetting, soiling and smearing
- Sexual precociousness - Sexual and emotional abuse often isolates young people from their peers. They have knowledge of sex beyond their years and this often attracts either censorious or seductive behaviour from adults. Their physical contact with others often has quasi-sexual elements of which they are usually unaware, with inappropriate touching and disinhibition with personal space. In some cases students may behave in a sexually provocative manner. They may also become involved in sexual relationships outside their family and/or the initial abusive relationship/s
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters in talk
- Inappropriately high levels of sexual arousal to minimal stimulus
- Changes in eating patterns, loss of appetite and food faddiness
- Apparently indiscriminate attempts to involve peers and adults in sexual relationships
- Social isolation and withdrawal
- Poor peer-group relationships
- Suicide attempts, para-suicide behaviour and deliberate self-injury.
- Excessive anxiety about medical examinations or undressing in front of others.
- Promiscuity
- Sexual disinhibition such as masturbating publicly
- Anti-social behaviour and delinquency.

- Involvement in prostitution
- Sexually abusing other more vulnerable students

With the exception of prostitution, none of the above signs and symptoms on their own definitively indicate sexual abuse. Staff should not conclude simply because any of the above are observed that sexual abuse has occurred.

However if the above signs and symptoms are observed it is of vital importance that they are carefully recorded and fully discussed with the appropriate Neighbourhood Head who will, if appropriate, report to the Student Protection Worker.

3.3.8 PHYSICAL ABUSE INDICATORS

Signs of physical abuse are by their nature, usually much more obvious than signs of sexual abuse. It is important, if such signs are observed, that staff obtain a full history of how any injury was incurred. Where possible, a student's account of physical injury will be verified by a Neighbourhood Head. All such injuries should be carefully recorded (diagrammatically if possible) and if necessary examined by a doctor. However, sensitivity must be used when questioning any student about any unexplained injury. Further, if there is any disclosure of abuse, guidance as per section 4 of this policy must be followed.

3.3.9 EMOTIONAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT INDICATORS

Signs of emotional abuse and neglect are likely to be very different in each individual student. Mainly it will be seen in behaviour and emotional development. It is important to note that the effects of emotional abuse can be as damaging to a student's healthy development as any other form of abuse.

Students may either make direct allegations of abuse, or more generalised hints that abuse may be occurring or have occurred. Examples may include:

- Asking staff about secrets, threats and the consequences of disclosure
- Heightened anxiety
- Sudden mood swings
- Appearing paranoid
- Sleepless nights and early waking
- Lack of concentration
- Increased drinking, smoking and substance abuse

It is essential that all staff even in the absence of sexual and physical abuse indicators are aware that on no occasion should they agree to 'keep secret' disclosure information. It must be made clear that such information will be discussed with the appropriate Neighbourhood Head and may be shared with a small group of other professionals. This should be done sensitively and include reassurance that the student will be supported throughout.

Handling such situations takes sensitivity and skill. Guidance and support is therefore integrated into both Student Protection training and supervision.

3.4 CODES OF PRACTICE AND BEHAVIOUR

- 3.4.1 Good practice guidelines
- 3.4.2 Practices to be avoided
- 3.4.3 Practices never to be sanctioned
- 3.4.4 Incidents that must be reported/recorded
- 3.4.5 Disclosures and reporting abuse
- 3.4.6 Acting on concerns about abuse by an adult occurring within RMET
- 3.4.7 Acting on concerns about abuse by another student within RMET
- 3.4.8 Speaking out

3.4.1 GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

All staff and volunteers are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within RMET.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- Treating all students as individuals and with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each student first
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with students
- Following RMET guidelines on appropriate touch
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering students to share in decision making
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the care plan
- Seeking the opinion of parents and other professionals - Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered
- Being an excellent role model
- Giving students enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of all students
- Ensuring you have appropriate consent in writing, in case the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs and any treatment given
- All staff working with students on a 1:1 basis must familiarise themselves with the RMET Lone Workers Policy

3.4.2 PRACTICES TO BE AVOIDED

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with students away from others
- Dressing in a way that may be sexually misconstrued by students

If it is necessary, in an emergency, to be alone with a student for an extended period e.g. if s/he sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, this should be with the full knowledge and consent of the Neighbourhood Head.

3.4.3 PRACTICES NEVER TO BE SANCTIONED

The following should never be sanctioned. Staff should never:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a student unless a full risk assessment has been undertaken
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow students to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a student, even in fun
- Discuss students' behaviour within hearing range of other students
- Reduce a student to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a student to be ignored
- Do things of a personal nature for students that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow students to stay at their homes unsupervised unless with the explicit permission of the Neighbourhood Head

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for students, particularly if they are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out as detailed in the student's care plan, and staff should be responsive to his/her reactions, including talking with him/her about what they are doing and giving choices where possible. This is particularly so where staff are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a student to carry out particular activities. All staff must avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which they are not appropriately trained.

3.4.4 INCIDENTS THAT MUST BE REPORTED/RECORDED

Any of the following must be reported immediately both to the Neighbourhood Head and on a Serious Occurrence Form.

- If a student makes any type of disclosure relating to sexual, physical and emotional abuse or neglect
- If you suspect a student is about to make a disclosure relating to sexual, physical and emotional abuse or neglect
- If you note any signs of sexual, physical and emotional abuse or neglect
- If you accidentally hurt a student
- If a student seems grossly distressed in any manner and you are unable to clarify the cause of the distress
- If a student appears to be sexually aroused by your actions

The Neighbourhood Head will ensure the student's social worker and/or parents student are informed:

3.4.5 DISCLOSURES AND REPORTING ABUSE

Responding to initial allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of any person working for RMET in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not student abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

RMET assures all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his or her concern that a student is experiencing abuse or has experienced abuse in the past.

Disclosure Procedure

If a student discloses information about harm or abuse (sexual, physical, emotional or neglect) they may have suffered themselves or believe that another student may have suffered, the following basic principles must be followed.

Do:

- Listen very carefully, be calm and non-judgemental, remembering as much as possible in order to write a full account as soon as possible
- Make sure you are in a quiet, private space in which to talk to the student
- Accept what is said without judgement and take everything seriously
- Allow the student to recall events without interruption or prompting
- Reassure the student that there are people who can help
- Let the student lead
- Leave the conversation where the student does
- Re-assure the student that he/she will not get into trouble
- Ensure that the student knows that the disclosure procedure will not be routed through a person against whom allegations have been made
- Tell the student briefly what will happen next
- Make a written record of what the student has told you and what you did about it
- Make sure that written accounts are as comprehensive as possible, and include a verbatim record of what the student said
- Report your concerns verbally immediately to either a Neighbourhood Head or (if the Neighbourhood Head is not available) the Student Protection Worker
- Follow up with a written report on a Serious Occurrence Form to a Neighbourhood Head within 24 hours

Do not:

- Ask leading questions or dig for information
- Expect the student to disclose more than they are able
- Share the information with other staff or students
- Assure the person disclosing to you that you will keep the information you have heard strictly confidential. Explain that other staff and the Student Protection Worker and relevant others will need to be informed
- Prompt or second-guess what the student wants to say
- Add anything of your own
- Get the student to repeat himself/herself unnecessarily
- Re-interview the student at a later stage
- Attempt to correct inconsistency or known inaccuracies

All those making a complaint, allegation or expressing concern, whether they be staff, students, student's family or members of the general public, should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will be treated confidentially within the intent outlined in this policy
- They will be given support and afforded protection if necessary
- They will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner
- They will be kept informed of action that has been taken and the outcome of their disclosure

Gathering useful information about suspected abuse

To ensure that information given during a disclosure is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The student's name, age and date of birth
- The student's term time and home addresses and telephone numbers
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information
- Clear distinctions between fact, opinion and hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The student's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Does the student think anyone else should be told?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- If the student was not the person who reported the incident, has the student been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details

This record must be passed to the Neighbourhood Head within 24 hours of the disclosure being made. Where possible referral to the police or social services by the Student Protection Worker should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague for whatever reason, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by a student who was abused by another student who has left RMET or by an adult before the student entered RMET).

Where such an allegation is made, staff should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the Neighbourhood Head or the Student Protection Worker. This is because other students, either within or outside RMET, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults scheme 2004.

Procedure after disclosure

- The Neighbourhood Head or Student Protection Worker will take the lead responsibility and will follow the procedure set out in the documents relevant to the age of the student

- The staff member reporting the disclosure will be kept informed on a ‘need to know’ basis
- The Neighbourhood Head will ensure appropriate support is available for members of staff involved
- A student who has disclosed will be designated a member of staff who will refer directly to the Student Protection Worker
- Students should be guided to talk to their designated person(s) about the issues
- It is important that confidentiality, as outlined in RMET’s Confidentiality Policy is maintained whilst the investigation is proceeding
- If the allegation of abuse includes involvement in prostitution, a serious offence by a student and or a referral to the Secretary of State of a member of staff as per Section 2 (1) of the Protection of Children Act 1999, the National Commission for Social Care Inspection will be informed by the Student Protection Worker as per Standard 20 of the National Minimum Standards (Children’s Homes Regulations 2002).

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

Neighbourhood Heads will give consideration to the kind of support that students, parents and members of staff may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, Email: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

3.4.6 ACTING ON CONCERNS ABOUT ABUSE BY AN ADULT OCCURRING WITHIN RMET

A complaint against a member of RMET staff or volunteer may lead to one of three types of investigation:

- Criminal investigation - led by the police
- Student protection investigation - involving the Police, Social Services, RMET, Area Child Protection Committees (ACPC) and other agencies
- Disciplinary or misconduct investigation - led by RMET

The results of the police and student protection investigations will influence, but not determine, the results of any disciplinary investigation.

Action 1 - Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Head of college will deal with it as a misconduct issue; using the guidance of the Department of Human Resources as necessary.

If the allegation is about poor practice by a Neighbourhood Head or the Student Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Head of College who will decide, if necessary in conjunction with the Department of Human Resources how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Action 2 - Concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a student has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should immediately be reported to the Neighbourhood Head or Student Protection Worker who will take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of the student in question and any other student who may be at risk. All information relating to allegations will be held by the Student Protection Worker in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

The Student Protection Worker will refer the allegation within 24 hours to the Head of College and the relevant Social Services Department who may choose to involve the police. If the relevant Social Services Department is unavailable the Student Protection Worker may contact the police directly. The parents or carers of the student will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services Department. The Student Protection Worker will seek Social Services' advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

Investigation Committee

Once an allegation has been referred to the Neighbourhood Head, the Neighbourhood Head will meet with the Student Protection Worker and Head of College and if appropriate a member of the Department of Human Resources to form an Investigation Committee. This will take an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and Social Services inquiries.

At the conclusion of Social Services and/or police inquiries the Investigation Committee, will also assess whether a member of staff or volunteer should be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Investigation Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the student should remain of paramount importance throughout.

The Head of College will deal with any media enquiries relating to the allegation.

3.4.7 ACTING ON CONCERNS ABOUT ABUSE BY ANOTHER STUDENT OCCURRING WITHIN RMET

It must be understood that some (but not all) victims of abuse may become perpetrators of abuse to others, or behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Where there is a history of such behaviour a risk assessment will be undertaken. If any concern is raised or allegation made, by a student regarding the behaviour of one of their peers, the matter must be raised with the Neighbourhood Head immediately. Full recording of events must be made. If there is an allegation of abuse the Student Protection guidelines as detailed in this policy will be followed.

In circumstances where it is believed a student presents a specific threat to any other student the Neighbourhood Head, in conjunction with the Student Protection Worker and the Placing Agency will make specific arrangements to ensure the protection of the alleged victim.

If additional staffing, e.g. waking night staff, are needed the decision will be made by the Student Protection Worker in conjunction with the Placing Agency. In circumstances where a Placing Agency is unable or unwilling to agree to necessary action to protect a student it may be considered a breach of contract and, as such jeopardise the placement.

If additional protection measures cannot ensure the safety of the alleged victim, a decision may be made to separate the alleged abuser and victim. In such case the alleged abuser may be moved.

All such decisions must involve active negotiation with the Placing Agencies involved. Those with parental responsibility and significant others must also be kept informed. This includes the Placing Agencies of other affected students in RMET.

In circumstances where there is a very serious allegation of abuse by one student against another, the Head of College may choose to exclude the student if suitable alternative arrangements cannot be made. This can only occur with the prior authorisation of the Council of Management of RMET.

If RMET is aware that specialist care and treatment for students with a history of sexually inappropriate behaviour is required then particular sensitivity is required in the implementation of this part of the policy. By definition, students with a history of sexually inappropriate behaviour are highly likely to present a risk to each other, and other students. All such students must therefore have a dedicated risk assessment that covers the possibility of victimising, being victimised and/or engaging in consensual (but inappropriate) sexual activities.

3.4.8 SPEAKING OUT

Failure to act on an allegation or suspicion of abuse may be regarded a serious disciplinary matter.

Each member of staff has an individual responsibility to act in a way that promotes and protects the welfare of each student. This includes reporting any action or other suspicions regarding any other member of RMET, if it is believed that the behaviour or action of that person is placing the safety and welfare of a student in jeopardy, whether actually or potentially.

RMET acknowledges that allegations against staff and volunteers may cause distress both to the individual/s concerned and to the wider staff group. All staff will be expected to take into account issues of respect and confidentiality in relation to all people involved in any such situation and/or investigation. RMET will provide appropriate support in these circumstances

RMET acknowledge legislation highlighting expectations around disclosure of suspected child and adult abuse (Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) - the 'whistle-blowers charter'.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 invites workers "to make disclosure of colleagues' likely commission, or commission of a criminal offence; actual, or likely, failure to comply with a legal obligation; behaviour which might lead to a miscarriage, or likely miscarriage, of justice, or actual, or likely, danger to the health and safety of a person; behaviour which might lead to actual, or likely, damage to the environment, or finally to the concealment of any of these."

If a member of staff or volunteer witnesses or has knowledge of abusive or bad practice or any activity which may adversely affect student welfare or RMET they should:

- Inform a Neighbourhood Head or Student Protection Worker or, if neither is available, the Head of College as soon as possible
- If the member of staff feels unable to inform of alleged abuse or bad practice within RMET, they should inform the Commission for Social Care Inspection as soon as possible. See Section 6. Key Contacts.
- Staff or volunteers should not discuss any disclosures with other members of staff, volunteers or students.

In respect of such disclosures the Board of Trustees of RMET acknowledge that any member of staff acting in good faith can expect:

- To be taken seriously
- To be treated with respect
- Not to be victimised or treated with prejudice in respect of their disclosure
- That all information given within a disclosure will be treated within the terms of the RMET confidentiality policy

3.5 KEY SUMMARY

It is essential that RMET staff and volunteers know what decisions they can make themselves and what decisions must be referred to a more senior member of staff.

The procedures laid out in the accompanying flow chart detail the way in which referrals of concerns must be made, the way work will be conducted at each stage including the collection and recording of relevant information and which key actions will need to be taken. This is to ensure that student protection issues are brought to the attention of Neighbourhood Heads and staff with the appropriate experience and knowledge who are empowered to take decisions relating to student protection issues.

In the process of upholding this Student Protection Policy RMET acknowledges that:

- The welfare of the student is paramount
- All students, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse
- All students in the care of RMET will be provided with appropriate safety and protection
- All staff and members of the public may have the potential to abuse students in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with students
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff and volunteers working in RMET have a responsibility to report concerns relating to student abuse and harm to the Neighbourhood Head or Student Protection Worker
- All staff and volunteers will be given appropriate education and training to make informed and confident responses to specific student protection issues.

4. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

- 4.1 Policy Statement
- 4.2 Objectives of this policy
- 4.3 Defining bullying
- 4.4 The importance of responding to bullying?
- 4.5 Recognising bullying
- 4.6 Procedures
- 4.7 Outcomes
- 4.8 Prevention
- 4.9 Additional support
- 4.10 Staff training

4.1 POLICY STATEMENT

All young people need to feel safe, respected and valued by their peers and adults in order to learn and achieve their full potential. RMET is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

This is undermined by bullying which is an abuse of power over others. Section 3.3.2 of the Student Protection Policy states that bullying can also be defined as Emotional Abuse.

RMET believes that bullying of any kind is unacceptable and should be actively discouraged and appropriately dealt with when it occurs. This requires staff and students to report their observations and concerns. Students need to be supported to report their experiences of bullying and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Any member of staff or student who knows that bullying is happening should tell their Neighbour Head (staff), or Personal Tutor (student).

4.2 OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

- All staff and volunteers, students, parents and carers should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All staff, volunteers, students and parents should understand the RMET policy on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- As a college we take bullying seriously. Students, parents and other interested parties should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated

4.3 DEFINING BULLYING

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional
being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical
pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

- Verbal
name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber
All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse; mobile threats by text messaging & calls; misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

And may also involve aspects that are:

- Racist
racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual
unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic
focussing on the victim's sexuality

4.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPONDING TO BULLYING

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

RMET has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

4.5 RECOGNISING BULLYING

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a student:

- is frightened of walking to or from the college
- doesn't want to go on the transport to the college
- begs to be driven to college by the Houseparent or other member of staff
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to college or develops phobias of college
- begins to truant or abscond
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in college work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (lunch has been purposefully missed)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children, students or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and investigated

4.6 PROCEDURES

All students will be encouraged to report bullying to staff and know that:

- Incidents will be recorded by staff
- In serious cases parents or carers will be informed and invited to a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

All incidences of bullying noted by staff during the day should be reported to the Support and Attendance Coordinator, who should inform the appropriate Neighbourhood Head

All incidences of bullying in the residential setting should be reported to either the Duty Manager or directly to the area Neighbourhood Head.

A designated Neighbourhood Head will be responsible for ensuring that the incident has been appropriately recorded and investigated and that appropriate action has been taken.

The designated Neighbourhood Head will make every reasonable effort to make sure that the student being bullied:

- Is listened to and believed in an appropriate setting
- Has their concerns addressed
- Is encouraged to take part in the process of deciding on follow up action.

The student suspected of bullying will be:

- Listened to in appropriate setting
- Presented with the established facts, following the investigation of any allegation
- Helped to understand the seriousness and damaging consequences of their bullying behaviour
- Helped to understand the reasons for the action taken
- Told that if the bullying persists the designated Neighbourhood Head will inform Heads of College which may result in disciplinary procedures being followed.

4.7 OUTCOMES

As a consequence of staff interventions:

- The bully (bullies) may be asked sincerely to apologise. Other consequences may take place
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered as part of the RMET Discipline and Sanctions Policy. See section 11
- If possible, the students will be reconciled

- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, continual monitoring will prevent any repetition.

4.8 PREVENTION

Working proactively, RMET will use the following methods to prevent bullying.

- Referring students to college anti-bullying procedures and policies
- Requiring students to sign behaviour contracts
- Requiring students to participate in anti-bullying workshops. These may include discussions about bullying, role play, writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying and reading real life stories about bullying.

4.9 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Staff and students may access additional support on tackling bullying from the following organisations:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) | 020 7354 8321 |
| Children's Legal Centre | 0845 345 4345 |
| Parentline Plus | 0808 800 2222 |
| Youth Access | 020 8772 9900 |
| Bullying Online | www.bullying.co.uk |

4.10 STAFF TRAINING

All staff will receive information about how to recognise, prevent and work with bullying issues via:

- The RMET Anti-bullying policy and procedure
- Access to the following information packs "Stop Bullying", "Preventing Bullying" and "You Can Beat Bullying"
- anti-bullying training and awareness raising events

5. WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

5.1 Statement of intent

5.2 The legal position

5.3 Procedures

5.4 Outcomes

This policy details the steps staff will be expected to take if they suspect a colleague of poor practice that directly impinges on the welfare and safety of a student or of potential or actual abuse. It does not supersede part 18 of the Staff Handbook which details procedures for Reporting a Wrong Doing (dishonest or illegal act, poor practice not related to student welfare and safety). The Whistle Blowing Policy and Reporting a Wrong Doing both form part of a staff contract of employment.

5.1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

Each member of staff has an individual responsibility to act in a way that promotes and protects the welfare of each student. This includes reporting any suspicions regarding any other member of RMET, if it is believed that the behaviour or action of that person is placing the safety and welfare of a student in jeopardy, either actually or potentially.

RMET acknowledges that allegations against staff and volunteers of student abuse will cause distress to the individual/s concerned and in the wider staff group. All staff will be expected to take into account issues of respect and confidentiality in relation to all people involved in any such situation and/or investigation. RMET will provide appropriate support in these circumstances

Failure to act on an allegation or suspicion of abuse may be regarded a serious disciplinary matter.

5.2 THE LEGAL POSITION

RMET acknowledge legislation highlighting expectations around disclosure of suspected and actual child and adult abuse (Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) - the 'whistle-blowers charter'.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 invites workers "to make disclosure of colleagues' likely commission, or commission of a criminal offence; actual, or likely, failure to comply with a legal obligation; behaviour which might lead to a miscarriage, or likely miscarriage, of justice, or actual, or likely, danger to the health and safety of a person; behaviour which might lead to actual, or likely, damage to the environment, or finally to the concealment of any of these."

5.3 PROCEDURES

If a member of staff witnesses or has knowledge of abusive or bad practice or any activity which adversely affect the welfare or safety of a student they should:

- Inform a Head of College or the Principal as soon as possible who will follow the appropriate student protection and / or disciplinary procedure
- If unable to inform within RMET, inform the Commission for Social Care Inspection:
RMC - 01452 632750
GHC - 0121 423 5410
FMC - 0114 256 4530
- Not discuss it with other members of staff or students

5.4 OUTCOMES

Any member of staff acting in good faith can expect:

- To be taken seriously
- To be treated with respect
- Not to be victimised
- The information to be treated within the terms of the RMET confidentiality policy

6. LONE WORKING POLICY

6.1 Definition

6.2 Situations where lone working takes place

6.3 Procedures taken to mitigate any risk that might arise from lone working

6.1 DEFINITION

Lone working refers to a staff member having responsibility for one or more students on or away from RMET property in a situation where there are no other staff members present. Full risk assessments are undertaken on students to ascertain the suitability of 1:1 working and staff must follow risk assessment guidelines at all times.

Staff notice is drawn to Good Working Practices of the Student Protection Policy Section 3.4.1.

6.2 SITUATIONS WHERE LONE WORKING TAKES PLACE

Workshop and education sessions

The general practice in RMET colleges is for timetabled sessions to involve no more than three students working with a tutor. Communication, Word and Number (CWN) Tutors regularly work with students on a 1:1 basis in discrete CWN sessions.

Therapy sessions

Therapy sessions are generally held on a 1:1 basis.

Residential provision

It is the norm at RMET colleges for three to four students to share a household with two house parents or residential support workers. Situations where lone working takes place in the residential setting would generally only be as follows:

- a single house parent working with two students
- a support worker offering intermittent support to one or two students living in an independence training flat
- a single support worker sleeping over in a household where, other than sleepover, at least two staff members would be on duty at any one time.

6.3 PROCEDURES TAKEN TO MITIGATE ANY RISK THAT MIGHT ARISE FROM LONE WORKING

Workshop and education sessions

- Staff members are fully vetted (references and CRB checks)
- Groupings of students and staff members are carefully considered in the programme planning process
- Most sessions and activities are in visible locations and there is an expectation of regular visits from staff members, students and members of the public
- The Support and Attendance Co-ordinator (SAC) is in radio or phone contact with all tutors and can provide appropriate intervention when requested
- All students have an allocated Personal Tutor and Neighbourhood Head and have regular opportunities for confidential conversation
- Personal Tutors participate in fortnightly peer supervision

Therapy sessions

- Therapists are fully vetted and are expected to be members of their own professional associations
- When therapy sessions are planned careful consideration is given to the specific groupings
- Therapy rooms are close by other staffed activities
- Although therapy sessions are confidential in nature there is still a general expectation of occasional visits and interruptions
- Therapists meet on a weekly basis to review their work and share good practice
- The Support and Attendance Co-ordinator (SAC) is in radio or phone contact with all tutors and can provide appropriate intervention when requested
- All students have an allocated Personal Tutor and Neighbourhood Head and have regular opportunities for confidential conversation

Residential provision

- Staff members are fully vetted (references and CRB checks)
- Groupings of students and staff members are carefully considered in the residential placement planning process
- Residential provision is provided in domestic scale accommodation in the community, with households grouped into neighbourhoods. There is an expectation of networking, mutual support and visits between staff and students within the neighbourhood
- Neighbourhood Heads carry out regular unannounced visits to the households in their neighbourhood
- Neighbourhood Heads carry out regular supervision with house parents and residential support workers, both formal and informal
- The 24 hour emergency on-call network is available for staff members in all households and provides access to senior staff as required
- All students have an allocated Personal Tutor and Neighbourhood Head and have regular opportunities for confidential conversation

7. CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

- 7.1 Policy statement
- 7.2 Commitment to students' confidentiality
- 7.3 Procedures
- 7.4 Outcomes
- 7.5 Confidentiality in other areas

The following section summarises those areas of the confidentiality policy most relevant to student protection. Staff are reminded of their responsibility to read the Student Protection Policy and specifically sections:

- 3.2.5 Confidentiality
- 3.4.5 Disclosures and reporting abuse
- 3.4.6 Acting on concerns about abuse by an adult occurring within RMET
- 3.4.7 Acting on concerns about abuse by another student within RMET
- 3.4.8 Speaking out

7.1 POLICY STATEMENT

Possible abuse of vulnerable young people always demands urgent action. Where a student makes a disclosure of any form of abuse or is thought to have suffered such abuse, this policy details the protocol and system of line management to which staff must adhere to ensure that appropriate procedures can be implemented. Investigation of disclosure or allegations of emotional, physical or sexual abuse may result in student protection procedures involving Social Services, health services, education, police and other services.

RMET operates within a system of 'extended confidentiality' to ensure safe and best practice for the wellbeing of students to whom they owe a responsibility. RMET sees the guiding principle for information sharing within the organisation as that of the 'need to know'. *Good practice is viewed as a shared responsibility. The College regards this as a particularly effective approach to providing the best possible service to students who have highly complex emotional, behavioural, communication and educational needs.*

RMET policy on confidentiality covers all sites. RMET requires all staff to share information about students and Colleagues with discretion, sensitivity and respect.

7.2 COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS' CONFIDENTIALITY

RMET recognises that its students have a right to have information about them kept confidential, and that this is essential for maintaining their trust in the organisation and hence essential for running the service. All students must be informed of this confidentiality policy, and efforts made to confirm that they understand it. When students are informed about the policy, they should be informed of their rights to make a formal complaint should they believe their confidentiality has been breached.

7.3 PROCEDURES

With regards to student protection RMET wishes to emphasise that: “staff should not make promises which cannot be kept to a student and in the light of possible court proceedings should not promise that what is said in confidence can be kept in confidence.”

Furthermore the student must be made aware of this approach from the outset of any disclosure. However, in an attempt to maintain appropriate duty of confidentiality towards the student, (and any other individual against whom an allegation may be made) staff members are required to limit discussion of disclosure or suspicion of abuse to their immediate line managers (Neighbourhood Heads, and/or Heads of College) for the purpose of appropriate information gathering.

Information sharing from this point will be made strictly on a ‘need to know’ basis and often will involve people from external agencies. This is to ensure that the student is supported and advised by expert professionals This approach also ensures that important evidence is not contaminated and that precise, factual details are recorded in a manner that is appropriate to any ongoing investigation.

7.4 OUTCOMES

RMET will support staff who correctly follow the RMET policy on confidentiality. It is a condition of employment in RMET that staff who breach confidence may be dismissed, whilst volunteers may be asked to leave. The RMET policy on confidentiality is binding on both paid employees and volunteers, including managers and trustees

7.5 CONFIDENTIALITY IN OTHER AREAS OF OPERATION

Introduction

RMET operates a therapeutic-educational style of working which is based on a multi disciplinary approach. This means that the needs of students, which are identified and worked with through the extended curriculum, are viewed and responded to in as holistic a manner as possible. Individual practitioners (tutors, admissions staff, residential staff, support-workers, managers, college nurse, Doctor and therapists each contribute their particular expertise to the full care of the student.

Multi-disciplinary/team working

All therapists and professionals involved in the care of students will be bound by their professional organisation’s own Code of Conduct. Differing expectations and obligations can generate problems and conflicts in the area of confidentiality, particularly for counsellors and psychotherapists Section B.3.1 of the BACP Code of Ethics and Practice for Counsellors (1998) states that:

‘Confidentiality is a means of providing the client with safety and privacy and thus protects client autonomy. For this reason any limitation on the degree of confidentiality is likely to diminish the effectiveness of counselling’.

It is common practice, however, when a practitioner works within an agency or organisation, for confidentiality to be held within the agency rather than by the

counsellor/therapist. Effectively this means working in the context of 'confidentiality within the team'.¹

The information kept about students is held in Student Records and is for use only within the organisation on a 'need to know' basis. These records are protected by the Data Protection Act.

The responsibilities of employees/volunteers

All staff must follow the policies and procedures detailed in this document.

This is a condition of service in the organisation and breaches of it may lead to dismissal, or being asked to leave.

Information obtained other than through work in the organisation

RMET will seek permission from each student for the sharing of relevant information on a strictly 'need to know' basis as part of the Admissions procedure.

General information about student background is available to all staff and is shared through the Summary of Background Information sheet. This sheet is prepared and circulated before the arrival of the student to:

- help staff ensure as easy a transition to College life as possible
- identify individual students' needs
- identify staff responsibilities to individual students.

Reports, student information, correspondence and any other documentation from other agencies will be held both on Computer and in individual paper files held in a secured environment. Computerised information is subject to Data Protection and formal information-sharing arrangements. This information is accessible to Tutors and residential staff on a 'need to know' basis and will be signed out at Horsley Mill reception to be read only within the confines of Horsley Mill.

Information may not be reproduced without the express permission of the Head of College - Education. As part of the Medical Record is held at College, express permission for the reproduction of this medical information has to be obtained from the registering GP or the College Doctor or Nurse.

Information obtained or accumulated during the course of the students placement

Reports, correspondence, case review notes and any other documentation will be held on Computer and in individual paper files held in a secure environment. Consideration must always be given to the extent of disclosure of any personal information. It is often not appropriate (or relevant) to disclose more than a minimum of information for the purpose of the information-sharing arrangement.

Computerised information is subject to Data Protection and formal information sharing arrangements.

¹ Gerald, D. and Gerald, K. (1999) 'Counselling Adolescents', Sage Publications, London, p. 82.

Medical information

Medical notes relating to consultations provided by the College Doctor/Nurse are held securely and separately. This information is accessible to individual therapists, RMET Neighbourhood Heads and the Senior Management Team on a 'need to know' basis as deemed appropriate by the College Doctor or Nurse but will require his/her permission. The information will be read in the place where it is stored.

Counsellors, therapists and multi-disciplinary working

Counsellors and other therapists are sometimes requested to write reports as to:

- whether the students attend allocated sessions
- whether the students engage in sessions
- any concerns regarding health and safety of students or others.

Practitioners operating within the ethos of multi-disciplinary working are required to accept that ultimately confidentiality is held within the agency rather than by the individual counsellor/therapist. Effectively this means working in the context of 'confidentiality within the team' and relates to the College's Duty of Care to the student concerned.²

Counsellors/therapists are expected to share information with the College via the Doctor/Nurse/Senior Management where issues of risk or Health and Safety are identified.

From time to time multi-disciplinary teams are expected to share sensitive information. This information should only be disclosed where professionals deem it in the individual student's 'best interest'.³ Staff are expected to take into account issues of respect and confidentiality when talking about students, colleagues and third parties.

Information kept about students is held in Student Records and is for use within the organisation on a strictly 'need to know' basis. Such records are subject to the Data Protection Act.

Transferral of information between agencies

Care should be taken to ensure that information is accurate and/or that the status of the information is indicated. For example, the time period to which the information refers should be indicated, opinions should be identified as opinions, and the person holding the opinion should be identified.

All reasonable efforts should be made to check the accuracy of the information with the student or some other source.

Where confidential information is transferred by post it should be clearly addressed to the person who has the right to receive it, and marked confidential; and where by phone, it should be given only to the person authorised to receive it. Information should be transferred only on a 'right to know' and a 'need to know' basis.

² Gerald, D. and Gerald, K. (1999) 'Counselling Adolescents', Sage Publications, London, p. 82.

³ This usually relates to the risk of self harm, harm to others, medical emergency/issues, risk or perpetration of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, bullying.

The confidentiality of third parties

When disclosing information about one person, due regard should be given to protecting the confidentiality of others.

The student's rights of access to information

No information which is recorded about a student is confidential from that student, and all students have a right to see information recorded about them unless such information compromises the confidentiality of a third party.

In the case of health, education and social work records, client or data subject access can be denied where it would cause the student or other party 'serious harm'. Serious harm relates to the physical or mental health of either the data subject or a third party.⁴

For this reason medical information should be scrutinised by the GP, College Doctor or Nurse before being shared, in order to avoid causing 'serious harm' to the student and others.

⁴ Bor, R. Ebner-Landy, Jo. Gill, S. Brace, C. (2002), 'Counselling in Schools', Sage, London, pp. 146-147

8. INCIDENT AND OCCURRENCE REPORTING POLICY

- 8.1 What is an occurrence?
- 8.2 How staff report an occurrence
- 8.3 Why staff need to report an occurrence
- 8.4 Protocol for occurrence reporting

8.1 What is an Occurrence?

Any event or behaviour involving a RMET Student(s) that is either manageable but disruptive and a cause for concern, or significantly challenging and difficult appropriately to manage is considered an Occurrence. This would include events involving any of the following:

- Any damage to property - minor, serious and/or extensive
- Abusive language and low-level, physically aggressive outbursts
- Any behaviour that leads to the injury of Staff and/or Students
- Any inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Unauthorized absence from College premises or Residential placement
- Absconding that leads to the involvement of the Police and/or Social Services
- Any injury to a Student, whether accidental or intentional (this should also be recorded in the appropriate accident book)
- The death of a student
- Any action that puts a member of the public at risk
- Theft

8.2 How staff report an Occurrence

All staff involved in any type of Occurrence with a student should notify the Support and Attendance Co-ordinator (SAC) or Duty Manager as soon after the event as possible informing him/her of what occurred, when it occurred and with whom it occurred

Each member of staff involved with the Occurrence is required to write a detailed and accurate account within 24 hours of the event.

The Occurrence Report Form is available from the college reception or Neighbourhood Head office. Please submit the completed report to the Neighbourhood Head Administrator for typing and actioning. A copy of the report is sent to the Neighbourhood Head, Personal Tutor, Houseparent and Head of College.

8.3 Why staff need to report Occurrences

It is essential that all Occurrences be promptly and accurately reported, because it allows the Neighbourhood Head and Personal Tutor to track patterns of individual student behaviour. It also provides progressive evidence of difficult behaviour in the event that we have to ask parents or Social Services to intervene with a Student.

Some Occurrences need to be reported to the Student's placing authorities. When this is necessary the Senior Management Team requires detailed and accurate information.

Often the information is not required until long after the event, especially when the information needs to be used as evidence of progressively deteriorating Student behaviour. It is therefore essential to have as detailed and accurate a report on file as possible.

8.4 Protocol for Occurrence reporting

All occurrences are reported onto form OR1. The completed OR1 is handed into the Neighbourhood Head office, with a copy for the respective Neighbourhood Head.

The report is typed onto the system on OR2. The Neighbourhood Head decides if the occurrence is serious enough for external bodies to be informed. If so, they should be informed within 48 hours of the occurrence. The Neighbourhood Head contacts the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) if residential. Any documentation (eg copies of emails) is attached to the report.

After follow up has been completed and within 28 days, all occurrences deemed to be serious are transferred to form SOR3, given a final check by the Neighbourhood Head and forwarded to the LSC and CSCI. Copies are sent by email to Heads of Colleges and in hard copy to Houseparents/Homeproviders/Residential Support Workers and Personal Tutors.

The following criteria are used in judging whether or not an event/behaviour is a Serious Occurrence as per CSCI National Minimum Standards Reg37 - Notification of death, illness and other events:

- 37-(1) the registered person shall give notice to the Commission without delay of the occurrence of:
- (a) the death of any service user, including the circumstances of his death;
 - (b) the outbreak in the care home of any infectious disease which in the opinion of any registered medical practitioner attending persons in the care home is sufficiently serious to be so notified;
 - (c) any serious injury to a service user;
 - (d) serious illness of a service user at a care home at which nursing is not provided;
 - (e) any event in the care home which adversely affects the well-being or safety of any service user;
 - (f) any theft, burglary or accident in the care home;
 - (g) any allegation of misconduct by the registered person or any person who works at the care home.
- 37-(2) any notification made in accordance with this regulation which is given orally shall be confirmed in writing.

All occurrences, plus original written reports, are filed in the student(s)' yellow file(s).

9. MEDICAL AND THERAPY POLICY

- 9.1 Medical Administration Policy
- 9.2 Medical Administration Procedure
- 9.3 Procedure for the safekeeping and administration of medication
 - Safekeeping
 - Recording
 - Administration Procedure (General)
- 9.4 Procedures for use of medication when off-site
- 9.5 Controlled Drug Procedure
- 9.6 Procedure for students who will be self-medicating - Concerta XL
- 9.7 Procedure at College

9.1 MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students are correctly administered medicines which have been prescribed for them. The policy is particularly addressed to members of staff who administer medicine or First Aid, and to managers who supervise the procedures set out.

All medicines on College premises will be stored in a secure, locked storage area in a lockable room. Each household has a lockable facility to store medicines. Houseparents/Homeproviders and residential support workers will be responsible for dispensing students' medication. Occasionally, under controlled and planned circumstances, a student may be responsible for administering his/her own medication. This will be agreed with the College Medical Team in advance and be part of the student's medical care plan. Students will be given a lockable drawer or cupboard in which to store their medication. No student will ever be permitted to dispense another person's medication

9.2 MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURE

Houseparent/Homeproviders/Residential Support Workers will be responsible for the issuing and recording of their students' medicine, unless otherwise arranged and agreed by the College Medical Team.

No medicine of any type including homeopathic, allopathic, painkillers or vitamin pills is to be given to any student except in accordance with this policy and the Guide to Anthroposophical Medicine.

When a student is prescribed medication by the GP or College Doctor during college hours the College nurse will undertake to inform the Houseparent/Homeprovider/Residential Support Worker of the medication and associated procedure.

The College Nurse needs to be informed of any new medication that has been prescribed by the GP if a student is seen out of college hours. The college nurse will then record that new medication in the student's medical file.

The Neighbourhood Head will routinely check that each household is administering medicines according to this procedure.

The Houseparent/Homeprovider/Residential Support Worker must ensure that repeat prescriptions for continuing medication are obtained in good time from the appropriate Doctor.

Houseparents/Homeproviders/Residential Support Workers should use the repeat prescription fax request form for the appropriate Medical Centre at least one week prior to the medication running out.

Any medical information in the Household is to be kept in the lockable box containing the Student Files. All other medical information will be kept in the Student's Medical File.

Medical information will only be disclosed on a 'need-to-know' basis. The College Doctor and Nurse are subject to their own duties of confidentiality, as independent practitioners. No member of staff should withhold any significant information concerning a student's wellbeing from the college's Senior Management Team.

9.3 PROCEDURE FOR THE SAFEKEEPING AND ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Safekeeping:

- The drug cupboard should be kept securely locked and the key removed. The key must be kept secure at all times
- Medication should never be left unattended and should not be stored anywhere other than in the drug cupboard
- Houseparents/Homeproviders should carry out a medicine check not less than once every 3 weeks. This will insure that students' medication will not run out unexpectedly
- All medicines that have expired should be returned to a dispensing chemist or to the College Nurse for disposal and recorded on the medication chart under Returned/Destroyed
- Houseparents/Homeproviders will check the First Aid Kit (standard and Weleda) once a term

Recording:

- The quantity of any drugs prescribed should be recorded on the Medication Administration record chart, together with the date of prescription and the date the drugs were received. See Appendix 2
- Always sign the Medication Administration Record when medication has been issued
- Occasional medication administered by a health professional or prescribed on a 'taken as required' 'PRN' must be recorded on the student's current Medical Administration chart
- Do not count the homeopathic medication by hand, as they should not be touched. If direct from the chemist record the amount issued by the pharmacist, otherwise count by pouring onto a plate and then pour back into the bottle

Administration Procedure (General)

- Double check that the correct medication is being given to the correct student at the correct time
- Medication should be checked and dispensed to one student at a time, and then signed for
- Ensure that medication has been taken before signing the chart
- Never give drugs that are unlabelled
- If there are any queries, omit the medication and report to the Nurse or Neighbourhood Head/Duty Manager immediately
- Never give an additional “dose” if it is uncertain whether medication has been taken. Contact the College Nurse or Duty Manager as soon as possible for advice
- The person who actually administers the medicines on each occasion must initial the Medical Administration Chart

9.4 PROCEDURES FOR USE OF MEDICATION WHEN OFF-SITE

Home Visits

The Houseparent/Homeprovider/Residential Support Worker should ensure that sufficient medication marked with the student’s name and written instructions including dose and times to be given is passed on to the student’s parent or guardian. It may also be appropriate to send the medication recording chart or a copy of it for some students so parents can carry on signing the chart).

Holidays

The Houseparent/Homeprovider/Residential Support Worker should ensure that the Holiday Group Leader takes sufficient medication in a sealed container marked with each relevant student’s name and the relevant prescription charts for each student.

Hospital Stays

When a student is admitted to hospital, s/he should be accompanied by the prescription chart so that full details of the medication can be given to the hospital doctor.

Controlled Drugs

All students receiving Ritalin will be asked to request the slow release form, which is called Concerta XL, during their time at College. This will ensure that there are no controlled drugs to be issued during College hours and students will not have to carry this medication with them.

Controlled Drugs e.g. Concerta XL should be checked in the following way on every single occasion.

9.5 CONTROLLED DRUG PROCEDURE

It is essential that staff follow the procedure.

- For daily prescribing, the Houseparent/Homeprovider/Residential Support Worker will issue the medication and sign the student’s Medication Administration Record Chart, when the student has been observed to have taken the medication

- Following a transfer of responsibility i.e. when a student is transferred to another household, has holiday care in another household, goes on holiday, has a visit home or if there is overnight cover provided by a residential support worker or another houseparent, the following procedure must be followed
- The first Houseparent/Homeprovider/Residential Support Worker must count the number of tablets together with the person who is taking over responsibility. (see paragraph above)
- The first Houseparent/Homeprovider/Residential Support Worker then needs to record the quantity of the tablets in the Controlled Drug Register book
- The person taking over responsibility needs to sign the Controlled Drug Register book to agree the amount that they saw counted
- On return the same procedure as above must be followed, with two signatures being required again
- Any discrepancy found must be recorded and reported immediately to the Duty Manager/ Neighbourhood Head or College Nurse
- The Houseparent/Homeprovider/Residential Support Worker counting the medication and recording the quantity will check the controlled drug supply weekly. They will then sign the Controlled Drug Register book confirming the quantity of medication remaining

9.6 PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS WHO WILL BE SELF-MEDICATING WITH CONCERTA XL

A student with an agreement to self-medicate will be issued with a seven day Medidose pack or seven day pill dispensing box.

Each week the Houseparent/Homeprovider/Residential support worker will issue the student with 7 days supply of medication into the pill dispenser box. The person issuing and the student will sign the Controlled Drug Register book to confirm what has been issued

The College accepts that there will be rare occasions when, due to events in the house group or sudden and unexpected staffing shortages, it will not be possible to adhere precisely to this procedure regarding controlled drugs. To protect both students and staff, every effort should be made to overcome any obstacle to following the procedure (e.g. finding a second member of staff) or, failing that, to inform the College Nurse before departing in any way from the procedure.

Where controlled medication needs to be taken off-site, the procedure should still be followed, with both members of staff signing the controlled drug book and chart on return to the house-group. For longer holidays, a supply of the medicine may be given to the group leader designated by the College Nurse together with record sheets that will later be inserted into the Controlled Drug Register book when the student returns to College.

If controlled drugs are refused or destroyed this must be documented in the Controlled Drug Register book and any drugs to be destroyed must be taken direct to the chemist for disposal.

9.7 PROCEDURE AT COLLEGE

If the college nurse has to take receipt of a controlled drug the following procedure will apply:

On receipt of medication the college nurse, together with a senior member of staff, will count and record the amount of medication received into the Controlled Drug Register book. The medication will be stored in the drug cupboard in the medical room. When medication is removed from the drug cupboard the college nurse, together with the person taking responsibility for the medication will follow the same procedure.

10. SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AND SEXUAL HEALTH POLICY

- 10.1 Background to the policy
- 10.2 The policy
- 10.3 Responsibilities in implementing this policy
- 10.4 Differentiating between normal, problematic and abusive sexualised behaviour
- 10.5 Defining problematic sexualised behaviour
- 10.6 Recognising problematic sexualised behaviours
- 10.7 Sexually abusive behaviours
- 10.8 Recognising sexually abusive behaviour
- 10.9 Recording
- 10.10 The student's involvement with this policy

10.1 BACKGROUND TO THE POLICY

In the course of their regular tasks all RMET staff members, and especially Homeproviders, Houseparents, Residential Support Workers and Personal Tutors have to be careful, open and sensitive in striving to find the correct balance in offering guidance and support to students on the course and in their care.

They need to be aware that the students are young adults many of whom will be experiencing the onrush of sexual feeling and the desire for sexual activity in the same way as any young person in the age range 16 - 25 might do. Similarly they need to remain aware that it is right and natural for students to wish to form peer relationships and to engage in sexual experimentation without any "institutional" constraints hindering them. They also need to be aware that students may wish to have relationships other than heterosexual ones.

On the other hand, staff members also have consistently to bear in mind that the students on the course may be more or less vulnerable and that a degree of protection appropriate to each particular student will be expected by the students themselves and also by their placing agencies. It is also vital that staff, especially Homeproviders, Houseparents and Personal Tutors, are aware of those students whose personal history includes incidents of physical and sexual abuse, whether as victims or as perpetrators, and that they follow all consequent risk assessments as a matter of course.

10.2 THE POLICY

It is therefore the policy of RMET that students are free and encouraged to interact socially with peers both on the course and in the wider local community; and that they should be offered whatever support and guidance they need to be able to do this. Students who choose to interact sexually with peers will be given whatever guidance and support they require.

10.3 RESPONSIBILITIES IN IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY

It is the responsibility of the Homeprovider, Houseparent or Residential Support Worker to try to build up a relationship with the student whereby the student would feel secure enough to confide issues relating to sexuality should he or she wish to.

Within the residential setting it is the policy of RMET that where possible students have their own bedrooms and that they are encouraged to socialize freely with

peers both on and off the course. They should be able to entertain their friends in the privacy of their own rooms. Guidance and support, and where necessary boundaries, will be offered to the student in this context by the Homeprovider or Houseparent in line with his or her expectations for other members of their household. The nature of any boundaries set will be fully discussed with the student who may also wish to discuss it with their Personal Tutor and, in the event of any anxiety or issue of uncertainty being raised, with the RMET Neighbourhood Head or Head of College - Residential.

10.4 DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN NORMAL, PROBLEMATIC AND ABUSIVE SEXUALISED BEHAVIOUR

As individuals who are still in the developmental stages of adolescence, it is essential that students not be labelled with terms which may follow them into adulthood. Labelling a student as a “sexual abuser,” “perpetrator” or “having inappropriate sexualised behaviour,” may not only be misleading but also have unforeseen legal consequences and is also potentially detrimental to a student’s developing self concept. RMET therefore recognises that sexual behaviour lies on a continuum where, at one end, students display healthy, age-appropriate sexual behaviour and, at the other, are engaging in behaviours that are abusive. Between these two extremes lies a range of problematic sexualised behaviours of increasing complexity.

10.5 DEFINING PROBLEMATIC SEXUALISED BEHAVIOURS

Problematic sexualised behaviours are defined as sexual behaviours outside developmental norms which may be self directed or directed towards others, which are likely to have an impact on the student’s functioning or the functioning of others, but which are not coercive.

10.6 RECOGNISING PROBLEMATIC SEXUALISED BEHAVIOURS

Behaviour:

- Excessive masturbation
- Masturbation in public
- Exposure of self or others
- Making sexual noises in public and private
- Trying to touch others’ genitals
- Sexually explicit conversations
- Self-insertion of objects
- Simulating intercourse

Attitudes:

- Guilt
- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Feelings of shame

Frequency:

- Repetitive/compulsive
- More than one type of behaviour demonstrated

Upon discovery:

- Does not cease unwanted/unacceptable behaviour

10.7 SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Sexually abusive behaviour is defined as any sexual activity or sexual behaviour towards another person or animal that is unwanted, coercive or abusive or exceeds an accepted norm.

10.8 RECOGNISING SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour

- Threatens, bribes, forces or manipulates another student into sexual activity
- Penetration of vagina or anus with finger, penis, or object
- Oral-genital contact
- Cruelty towards animals

Attitude

- Hostile
- Aggressive
- Guilty

Frequency

- Pervasive
- Continuous
- Intensifies over time

Upon discovery

- Denial
- Behaviour does not cease

All staff are reminded of their duty to read the Student Protection Policy procedures for dealing with Sexually Abusive Behaviour.

10.9 RECORDING.

It is the responsibility of the Houseparent or Homeprovider to record any instance where specific guidance was sought by or offered to a student after full discussion with the student. The student diary should be used for this recording unless it represents a serious occurrence.

It is the responsibility of the Houseparent or Homeprovider in the residential setting, and of the Personal Tutor in all other settings, to follow RMET's Serious Occurrence procedure for any incidents which affect the health and safety (whether physical or mental) of any student.

Staff suspecting problematic sexualised behaviours must record their observations and discuss their concerns with the college medical team before discussing them with the student.

Staff suspecting sexually abusive behaviour must follow procedures detailed in the Student Protection Policy.

10.10 THE STUDENT'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THIS POLICY.

Students must have access to this policy. Where they might have difficulty following any wording or concepts the Houseparent, Homeprovider or Residential Support Worker should ensure that they fully understand its details and implications.

11. DISCIPLINE AND SANCTIONS POLICY

11.1 Policy relating to inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour of students

11.2 Procedure

11.3 Policy relating to exclusions

11.1 POLICY RELATING TO INAPPROPRIATE OR UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS

Students attend a RMET college because they require a higher level of support than is available in a general further education college in order to achieve their learning goals. RMET staff will help students to recognise the importance of being able to behave in a manner that is recognised as being appropriate both in college and in society at large.

The skill level of students is assessed before entry to a RMET college and throughout their time at the college. The skills that are assessed include “social and communication skills”. These include the ability to behave in a manner which is appropriate both in terms of societal expectation and personal development. The on-going process of monitoring and evaluating skill development is known as the Education Planning Cycle (EPC).

Due to the complex psychological and emotional profile of many RMET students, accurate assessment of skill levels is difficult and additional specialist assessments such as psychological and forensic assessments are sometimes required in order for RMET to gauge a student’s level of disability and potential risk to self and others.

Students have a team of staff members who have the opportunity to build trusting relationships with them and who are involved in the on-going monitoring and evaluation of their skill development through the EPC. These are: the Neighbourhood Head (NH), the Personal Tutor (PT) and the Houseparent/Homeprovider/Residential support worker (HP). The complete team meets annually with the student for a review of his or her placement at the college. The PT and HP meet with each of their students termly to review the student’s individual progress and development on the Ruskin Mill Orientation Course. Informally, the NH, PT, and HP are in regular contact with the student and attempt to be in touch with the issues that are important for the student.

11.2 PROCEDURE

The staff member with whom the student is working at the time will deal with any inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour in the first instance. This might be a tutor, a support worker, a residential support worker or any other member of staff.

If the inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour has caused a risk to the well being of the student concerned, or to other students, staff members or members of the public, then the staff member concerned will write a “Serious Occurrence Report”.

The RMET occurrence reporting structure requires the NH to follow up the issues raised by the occurrence and to liaise with the student’s PT and HP. The NH will also report to the college Senior Management Team (SMT) about the way in which

the issues have been resolved. This process will include discussion with the student, and may include some of the following steps:

- Ongoing follow up meetings with the student
- Specific action that the student is asked to participate in (e.g. counselling, reparations, payments for breakages etc.),
- Adjustments to the student's programme,
- Liaison with parents, carers, social workers or other relevant parties,
- Further reporting to relevant external agencies (e.g. Learning and Skills Council, Commission for Social Care Inspection, etc)

The college Senior Management Team, together with the student's NH, will decide if the issues raised are sufficiently serious to require the intervention of the SMT. The SMT and NH will assess the level of risk posed by the student's situation and/or behaviour.

11.2.1 The following progressive disciplinary guidelines will be used in the case of low to medium risk inappropriate behaviour:

The student's NH will inform Parents/Guardians, HP, PT, and external agencies whilst the following procedure is being carried out:

1. An appropriate behaviour contract will be agreed and put into writing
2. An initial formal warning of the consequences of continued inappropriate behaviour will be given verbally to the student by the NH and/or SMT and recorded. The student's Parents/Guardians, HP and PT will be verbally informed of the situation. This will be recorded.
3. In the event that the inappropriate behaviour continues, a second formal warning will be given to the student in writing, a copy of which will be sent to the student's Parents/Guardians, HP, PT, and external agencies
4. Following Step 3, a short suspension from the college may be appropriate, to enable the college to assemble additional resources, and help the student understand the serious consequences of their actions

Permanent exclusion from the college may be deemed necessary if the student's behaviour does not improve sufficiently and/or becomes a risk to self, others or the college.

Throughout any of the processes outlined above the student will have regular opportunities to address issues with his or her NH, PT, and/or HP. At any time they may also have recourse to the students' complaints and grievance procedures that are detailed in the "College Handbook".

11.2.2 The following guidelines will be used in the case of medium to high-risk behaviour (where there is serious and imminent risk to self, others or the College):

The student's NH will inform Parents/Guardians, HP, PT and external agencies whilst the following procedure is being carried out.

1. Immediate short suspension (usually 7 days or more) to gain additional information about the student, formulate an appropriate management plan, and assemble additional resources in order to properly implement the plan.

The NH will organize and facilitate a team meeting, including HP and PT, to identify and plan a way forward. When the student returns to college the steps outlined above in section 11.2.1, 1-6 will be followed as appropriate.

Or

2. Immediate short-term suspension with the purpose of external assessment

In the event that the assessment indicates a level of risk that is deemed manageable at RMET Colleges the student will be asked to return to College and appropriate action involving the steps outlined above in section 11.2.1, 1-6 will be followed

In the event that the assessment indicates a level of risk that is deemed unmanageable at RMET Colleges the student will be excluded and all parties will be formally advised within one week of the decision being made by the SMT

Or

3. Short - term suspension from the college to help the student understand the serious consequences of their actions, followed by steps outlined above in section 11.2.1, 1-6 of this progressive discipline procedure

Any criminal offence likely to have been committed by a student will be reported to the police. Whilst the police investigation is in process the student may be suspended and procedures 11.2.2, 1-3 outlined above may apply depending on the circumstances.

It is the intention of the RMET that students are fully supported throughout any behaviour or discipline proceedings. The safety and welfare of all RMET students and staff will be taken into account in any action that is decided upon.

In the event that a student is excluded from a RMET College as a result of the above procedure 11.2.2, 1,2 or 3, the student's Neighbourhood Head will facilitate a formal closure meeting with all appropriate parties as soon as possible after the decision has been made.

NH and SMT will review the disciplinary decision taken as a result of the above procedure at the end of the academic year. This team will decide whether or not, in response to a progressive disciplinary action, the student's situation has changed sufficiently to complete and close the process or whether the student's situation is such that it is appropriate to carry over the progressive disciplinary action into the student's subsequent year at College.

11.3 POLICY RELATING TO EXCLUSIONS

Definition

An “exclusion” is the decision by RMET to bring about a permanent ending of a student’s learning and residence (where applicable) at any college operated by RMET.

Policy

RMET endeavours to work with staff and students on the basis of mutual respect and co-operation with the aim of developing positive and supportive relationships

Staff will make every effort to understand and de-escalate a situation that involves challenging or illegal behaviour

RMET will exclude any student who persistently puts another student/s and/or staff at risk of harm

RMET will exclude any student who commits a serious criminal offence.

Procedure

Generally, the process leading to exclusion will be considered (methodical?) and consultation involving all interested parties, past, present and future may be undertaken.

Whenever possible the procedures outlined in this policy will be followed, but where the assessed risk offers no alternative, exclusion may be immediate.

12. MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

- 12.1 Statement of purpose and scope of policy
- 12.2 Policy approved by
- 12.3 Introduction
- 12.4 Philosophy of good practice
- 12.5 What you will find in this policy
- 12.6 Section 1 - understanding challenging behaviour
- 12.7 Section 2 - Permissible approaches to manage challenging behaviour
- 12.8 Section 3 - receiving support in the management of challenging behaviour

12.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF POLICY

Ruskin Mill Educational Trust (RMET) provides an innovative and experiential education for young people aged 16 (15 on assessment) - 25 with special learning needs. These young people are known as students. RMET operates three Colleges, Ruskin Mill College located in Nailsworth, Gloucestershire; the Glasshouse College, located in Stourbridge, West Midlands and Freeman College in Sheffield, South Yorkshire. The use of RMET in this document signifies these three Colleges and the residential accommodation provided by RMET, those employed by RMET or those contracted by RMET.

RMET recognises the vulnerability of students placed at RMET and that all students have a right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse. Some students placed at RMET may present challenging behaviours requiring non-physical and physical interventions that could be misconstrued as harmful or abusive. This policy intends to give all interested parties a clear understanding of practices considered to be permissible within RMET in order to ensure the safety and welfare of students presenting challenging behaviour and to protect all paid and unpaid staff against allegations of bad or illegal practices by allowing them to make informed and confident responses to specific challenging behaviour issues.

This policy is to be followed by:

- All staff working for RMET in paid, unpaid or voluntary roles who undertake direct or indirect work with students on a one to one or group basis.
- This policy DOES NOT cover visiting professionals undertaking direct or indirect work with students or members of the public as visitors to RMET.

The policy is based on the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act (1989)
- British Institute of Learning Disabilities - Physical Interventions - A Policy Framework (1996)
- Section 550a of the No.2 Education Act (1998) - Department for Education
- British Institute of Learning Disabilities - Physical Interventions and the Law (2004)
- European Human Rights Act (1998)
- Training in the management of challenging behaviour - Studio III / BILD Accredited (2003)
- RMET Student Protection Policy (2005)
- No Secrets

12.2 POLICY APPROVED BY

This policy has been approved for implementation by the Council of Management of the RMET with the approval of the RMET Board of Trustees. It is the expectation of the RMET Council of Management that all paid or unpaid staff and volunteers will follow these procedures and practices at all times.

POLICY STATEMENT 1.

For the purpose of this policy, the philosophies, approaches and procedures detailed in this policy are the only procedures approved for use within RMET to manage challenging behaviours. Failure to follow this policy will generally be considered a breach of duty of care and may result in disciplinary action being taken. RMET may not support staff who have knowingly chosen to ignore this policy. Staff who have followed this policy have the right to expect support from their colleagues and RMET.

12.3 INTRODUCTION

RMET promotes non-aversive, low arousal approaches to the management of challenging behaviour. Staff will always try to identify the antecedents to challenging behaviours and address behaviours proactively before they reach crisis point. RMET recognises that it is crucial to the long term benefit of students and staff that patterns of challenging behaviour are identified at an early stage and that students are taught and encouraged to use functionally equivalent alternatives to challenging behaviours whenever possible.

Within the present and future population of students living at RMET there will be a number of students whose behaviour could be described as “challenging.” The behaviours exhibited by these students may present difficulties at the college, at home or in public, they may be short lived and easily managed or they may present more long term difficulties for the student and those around them.

In order to attempt to meet the needs of such students, RMET has developed policies and procedures relating to the way in which staff should work with all students. These documents are intended to give advice to all staff working within RMET and address the need to protect both students and staff in their daily contact with each other and with members of the public.

RMET recognises the spirit of the European Human Rights Act and in particular Article 3 which requires that no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and Article 5 which establishes the right to Liberty and Security. RMET actively discourages the use of physical intervention and physical restraint with challenging students but recognises that such procedures may be required as ‘an absolute last resort’ when all else has failed.

STUDENTS are entitled to expect that:

- The way challenging behaviour is managed ensures the safety and dignity of everyone
- RMET staff are able to cope with the emotions such behaviours can arouse in students and themselves and will manage incidents in a calm and professional manner.

12.4 PHILOSOPHY OF GOOD PRACTICE - RMET'S VALUES, BELIEFS, AND COMMITMENTS TO STAFF

RMET recognises that the staff's rights to use physical interventions to manage challenging students is enshrined and detailed within the BILD Physical Interventions - A Policy Framework (1996), BILD Physical Interventions and the Law (2005) and Section 550a of the No.2 Education Act (1998).

At RMET we are committed to providing staff with:

- A clear policy and procedure to manage challenging behaviour
- Appropriate training to manage the level of challenging behaviour they will encounter at RMET
- Effective monitoring of all incidents of violence toward staff
- Appropriate psychological debriefing or counselling in the case of persistent trauma

Being able to deal effectively with violent and challenging behaviour is an important part of your work at RMET.

It is your purpose at RMET to help students understand and accept their learning disability and challenging behaviour, with the aim that students may lead full and enriching lives within the college and wider community. This is a possibility for all of the students at RMET for most of the time.

There is often no single or simple solution to the problem of challenging behaviour, which may prove very difficult to change. It is therefore important that challenging behaviour is examined in context, and not in isolation, as it is often part of the complex whole that makes up an individual student's range of behaviour.

The keys to managing challenging behaviour in RMET are flexibility, planning, regular monitoring and review, and most importantly, an agreed, consistent, whole-college approach.

12.5 WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS POLICY

This policy is in four sections.

Section 1 deals with:

- What RMET think about challenging behaviour.
- Commonly used terms
- Thinking about challenging behaviour.
- Your legal position.

Section 2 covers:

- Permissible approaches to challenging behaviour.

Section 3 covers:

- Information on how you can get support if you are involved in a challenging incident whilst working at RMET.

12.6 SECTION 1 - UNDERSTANDING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

What we think about challenging behaviour

At RMET we use the term challenging behaviour to describe any behaviour that makes it more difficult for us to work with our students. This includes more than just violence and aggression.

Most young people with learning difficulties, developmental disorders or mental illness do not behave in a violent or aggressive way. Some do from time to time, but most incidents are normally quite easy to manage. Surveys have shown that our students who live at RMET do not usually present planned, calculated or sophisticated challenging behaviours.

The challenging behaviour at RMET is generally crude and uncomplicated. Although the challenging behaviours are often unsophisticated they may still affect you and the way you feel about the student.

Commonly used terms

Many people would say that challenging behaviour is literally anything that another person does that upsets you. Although this is fairly clear, it is worth spending a little time looking at the terminology that you will come across when working with challenging behaviour.

Behaviour

Behaviour is anything a person does that can be seen. This could include shouting, screaming and fist shaking. It does not include thoughts, feelings or emotions.

Aggression

Aggression is any behaviour that may lead to, or contribute towards violence. This may include verbal threats and/or aggressive posturing. Verbal threats are where a student threatens to attack. Aggressive posturing is where a student signals his or her intention to attack. This may be by excessive eye contact, screaming, fist shaking, or throwing objects to the floor.

Cue behaviours

Cue behaviours are the pattern of behaviours which staff begin to recognise as specific to an individual student. When cue behaviours are associated with challenging behaviour they normally signal the onset of a serious, possibly violent, incident.

Trigger

A trigger is something that happens that makes the actual violence more likely to happen. If we are good at spotting cue behaviours and avoiding triggers then we have a good chance of defusing the incident. Telling a student to follow your instructions when they are already upset may be a trigger.

Violence

Violence is any behaviour that results in unwanted physical contact. This may cause an individual to suffer fear, distress, pain or actual physical injury. It can include self-harm, where the student is directing the violence towards themselves. With some students staff are more likely to experience self-harm than violence directed towards others.

Where injury is sustained through consensual play, this would not normally be classed as violence.

Behaviour Management Plan

This is a short term individual plan to manage a student's challenging behaviours. Behaviour Management plans are reviewed regularly.

Thinking about challenging behaviour

There are many reasons why people behave aggressively or violently. Here are some possibilities:

- Not feeling comfortable in their living conditions
- Noise
- Pain
- Medication and changes in medication.
- Confusion
- Lack of activity or too much activity
- Too many rules
- Changes in routine
- The presence or behaviour of others
- Demands and requests
- Health problems
- Boredom
- Being exposed to aversive situations

There are four common causes of challenging behaviour which are relevant to students within RMET. These are:

Learned behaviours - where you are working with behaviours that have developed over time, as a result of how other people have developed relationships with our students or how students have responded to their environment at the time. These sorts of behaviours can be very difficult to change and sometimes we find ourselves having to manage the consequences of others' bad practice.

Communication problems - because we often do not understand the ways in which a student communicates, we often miss the signs when we need to give them our attention. As a result the student may use more intense behaviour to gain our attention. Over time they may learn that the best way to get our attention is to

only use the more intense and sometimes more aggressive and violent behaviours. This is a very difficult process to change and illustrates why understanding our students' own communication systems is so important.

Poor self-expression skills - many of our students have problems understanding and coping with their own emotions, especially when they are around others. They have difficulty telling you how they feel and often challenging behaviours are an inappropriate expression of these emotions and indicate that something is wrong.

Movement disorders - some of our students cannot always control their own behaviour because it has become a learned response or is related to a movement disturbance or neurological problem over which they have little or no control.

Your legal position

Unfortunately some of the behaviours that you may have to manage might require some kind of physical management ranging from moving away from the student to physically restraining them or even having to call the police. As soon as you get into this type of situation you are vulnerable to transgressing the law if you act out of instinct and not on the basis of your training.

An assault may be described as an unwanted aggressive action against another person. Striking a student is almost certainly an assault for which you would be sacked and probably charged by the police. It is very difficult to prove that striking was accidental. If in trying to prevent an assault you actually strike a student, then it could be an "assault and battery." In the management of aggressive and violent incidents the law holds that any force used must be "reasonable" in the circumstances. Unfortunately, there are no legal definitions of the term "reasonable force." When a person is charged with assault the prosecution has to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the force used was unreasonable in the circumstances.

POLICY STATEMENT 2.

For the purpose of this policy, striking a student even in fun during horseplay, is an assault and therefore forbidden.

The only acceptable methods of dealing with a violent or aggressive incident are those set out in this policy, or the individual student's behaviour management plan or their individual care plan.

RMET does not operate a 'hands off' policy - students may occasionally require physical guidance or 'steadying.' However taking hold of a student without their permission may be misconstrued as an inappropriate physical restraint and therefore an assault and staff must seek a student's permission if offering physical support or guidance.

POLICY STATEMENT 3.

Staff must not offer students physical support e.g. getting up in the morning, help with washing etc. without the permission of the student or unless previously agreed with the Neighbourhood Head.

Staff may sometimes encounter situations not covered within this policy or a student's individual behaviour plan. If this happens, staff should inform the

student's Neighbourhood Head and seek advice as to how to work appropriately with the situation.

POLICY STATEMENT 4.

In exceptional circumstances staff may have to exercise their duty of care towards students and act in good faith. RMET will support staff who have exercised their duty of care appropriately.

Further details of your duty of care towards Students are outlined in Appendix 1.

12.7 SECTION 2 - PERMISSABLE APPROACHES TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

1. Proactive strategies

Whilst this policy will focus on the management of aggressive and violent situations, many of these behaviours can be prevented.

Research has shown that the more activities students have to do in a day, the less likely these behaviours will occur. Conversely we need to be careful in not overloading our students, as too many activities, demands or requests can also cause problems.

POLICY STATEMENT 5.

RMET will provide clear guidance, via the Educational Planning Cycle (EPC) framework, the individual behaviour management plan and from the Neighbourhood Heads, as to how you should work with each student. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of the most recent guidance

If clear cue behaviours are recognised by staff, an attempt to defuse the situation by breaking the behavioural pattern can be attempted. Many causes of violence such as overcrowding, noise, changes in routine or poor communication can be avoided if they are recognized and planned for.

2. Managing versus changing behaviours

It is important to distinguish between changing and managing behaviours. Changing behaviours that have a long history can take a long time. It will involve detailed assessment, intervention, monitoring and review of the work done with a student. Most of this work involves developing a positive relationship with a student over a long period of time and is addressed through the EPC and therapeutic input.

Managing challenging behaviours involves containing a student's behaviour in a safe, respectful, dignified and acceptable way. Putting it simply, successfully managing an incident means that staff will use the least intrusive intervention for the shortest amount of time.

To change behaviour in a student requires building their confidence, self esteem etc. This work can be undermined by staff using power-based statements when attempting to manage challenging situations e.g. "I will not back down" or "I am

teaching the person a lesson". These methods in themselves will not change a student's behaviour and are not allowed at RMET. RMET expects its staff to take a low-arousal, non-aversive approach (as outlined in statement 5 of this section) when working with challenging situations involving students.

3. The role of college rules

Rules can also be described as important in changing behaviour. However, if the enforcement of a rule is likely to provoke violence, then staff should be prepared for such a reaction, both in terms of training and of contingency planning. In a situation in which a student appears to respond violently to the attempted enforcement of a rule then staff may choose not to impose the rule until the student is able to discuss the implications when they have calmed. If behaviour management plans(see policy statement 5) are not in place for students with known and severe challenges, then as few rules as possible should be enforced. It is a good idea to have as few rules as possible with students who present challenging behaviour and to ensure that the rules that you do have in place are followed consistently by all staff. Generally, the more rules there are, the more opportunities for conflict are created.

4. Risk assessments

Each Neighbourhood Head will, to the best of their abilities, complete risk assessments for all known risks relating to each of the students in their neighbourhood. The key risks identified are summarised in the EPC information sent to all tutors and residential staff each term. It is up to you to read the EPC T1 or HP1 summary of risk information and if you have any further questions to read the full assessments which are kept in the student's file in the College office. The risk assessments are revised at least once every six months. There is no excuse for not reading risk assessments. Remember they are there for your protection.

POLICY STATEMENT 7.

Each member of staff must be aware of and read the summary of risk information on the EPC T1 and HP1 forms.

5. Low arousal de-escalation approaches to challenging behaviour

At RMET we use a low arousal approach to manage challenging behaviours. A low arousal approach means that we must heed the following rules unless a behaviour management plan tells us to do otherwise.

POLICY STATEMENT 8.

Don't touch any student who appears agitated or aggressive or for whom there is an agreed behaviour management plan that contra-indicates touching.

Until you are confident that a relationship of trust has been established with a student and that you are aware of their cues and triggers, only touch a student who appears anxious or agitated if their behaviour management plan specifically tells you to do so. When a student is behaving aggressively, touch may well increase the chances of an incident.

There will be situations when touch is unavoidable: for example, when you are required to restrain. It must be remembered that during the restraint procedure, the amount of inter-personal space between you and the person will be reduced.

POLICY STATEMENT 9.

Do not use an aggressive stance when working with students e.g. folding your arms in front of you or placing your hands on your hips.

The posture you adopt has the potential to communicate a lot of information about the way you are feeling when confronted with a difficult situation. Placing your hands on your hips can suggest either dominance or indifference. Folding your arms in front of you can be interpreted as an aggressive stance motivated by fear. Your arms increase the size of your chest and reduce the amount of interpersonal space between you and the attacker. This policy recommends a relaxed posture with your hands held loosely in front or to the side of you, or out in front with your palms facing up at about waist level.

POLICY STATEMENT 10.

Avoid staring at a student.

Prolonged eye contact with another person is arousing. It causes a physical reaction. If you have ever tried to "stare somebody out" you will probably remember how uncomfortable it can feel. Prolonged eye contact can be seen as a signal of attack. Therefore avoid prolonged eye contact with students of more than a few seconds. Intermittent eye contact is preferable.

POLICY STATEMENT 11.

Appear calm when confronted by an agitated student.

When faced with potential violence, our bodies react in certain ways. Our heart rate increases, our faces become pale and our muscle tone increases. This reaction is entirely normal and is nature's way of preparing our bodies for either "fight" or "flight." Normally we have little control over this mechanism. What is important is to appear calm and confident even if you don't feel that way inside. Confidence comes from an awareness of the methods set out in this policy, the training you have received and the knowledge that your colleagues have had the same training.

POLICY STATEMENT 12.

Always keep your distance from an agitated or aggressive student

Unless a reactive plan says otherwise always back off at least an arm's length from a student who is agitated or aggressive. There is absolutely nothing wrong in backing away from a potentially violent person. However, do not allow yourself to be backed into a corner. If it appears that this may happen then leave the room immediately and observe from the doorway.

Avoid standing over a student if they are sitting down. Get down to the person's level at a safe distance and continue to ask them what is wrong or offer them distractions. Remember that the challenging behaviours may serve a very important function for the person and the only way the student can achieve their aim.

POLICY STATEMENT 13.

Remove other students and/or staff if an incident develops.

When an incident occurs it is not always possible to remove the challenging student from the situation. It is often easier to remove other students. Although an activity may have to stop due to this action, it is easier to do this than physically to remove the challenging student.

Remember that the student involved in the incident may become frightened if too many staff are around. Only one other member of staff should remain in the room to assist the member of staff who is actively managing the incident. This person must remain at a safe distance to observe the situation and only assist if necessary.

POLICY STATEMENT 14.

Divert and distract the student from the object or situation. You can ask the person to stop the behaviour or use an appropriate method as recommended by the person's PT, NH or HP (if available this information will be on the EPC T1 or HP1 form).

If you are trying to manage an incident which is not covered by a behaviour management plan then you should first calmly ask the student if you can help whilst holding your arms outstretched with the palms facing upwards. As well as being non-confrontational this is also for your own protection, though it will not work in all situations.

At RMET we encourage the use of distractions to defuse situations. Diverting an aggressive student from the source of a problem is often one of the easiest and most acceptable ways of defusing a potentially violent situation. It is not giving in. Offer distractions that you know students like. Only offer the distractions one at a time very clearly and slowly. It will work best if you can show the student the distraction so make sure it isn't too far away. Don't forget to wait for a response. This may take some time if you are working with a student with memory or speech difficulties.

POLICY STATEMENT 15.

Be aware of the tone of your voice and never shout at a student. Make sure you are aware of appropriate approaches to individual students. As a rule speak slowly and softly.

Speak slowly and softly to the individual student and try to avoid overlong sentences or explanations. Often the tone of your voice communicates more to a student than the words you use.

If there is a group of students present, do not address them as a group. Address yourself to the individual student exhibiting the challenging behaviour.

POLICY STATEMENT 16.

Never ignore a student who is directing behaviour at you, other students or themselves. Always try to listen to them or pick up on their non-verbal communications.

When a student becomes aggressive or angry they are often trying to tell you something, even if they have speech and language difficulties. It is extremely important to listen to the student. There may be something very simple that could be remedied by talking about it, although a person may need to be in a calm state to do this. Ignoring behaviours will not make them go away, in fact they are likely to get worse. Some students may ask you the same question or set of questions over and over again. Keep answering the questions as accurately as you can, even if it means giving the same answers, whilst trying to distract. Not answering the questions can have disastrous consequences and should only be done as part of an approved behavioural plan.

POLICY STATEMENT 17.

You may ask the Neighbourhood Head of a specific student to undertake an assessment and formulate a behaviour management plan in order to clarify strategies for helping to manage the student's behaviour.

6. Low-arousal, avoidance and physical intervention approaches to challenging behaviour

There will be very few incidents at RMET which will require any kind of physical escape or avoidance skills or physical intervention. However we do know that these behaviours may occur so the next part of the policy is intended to provide acceptable solutions to these problems.

POLICY STATEMENT 18.

No member of staff will be expected to use any physical skills to manage incidents until they have attended and successfully completed the three-day course in the management of challenging behaviour.

All staff working at RMET will attend a three-day course in the management of challenging behaviour within six months of joining RMET. Until this course has been successfully completed, new staff will leave the immediate area if it appears that an incident is becoming unmanageable and may require physical intervention. Untrained staff must inform at least two trained members of staff that their assistance may be required.

POLICY STATEMENT 19.

Although the use of physical restraint is very rare, untrained staff will not participate in physical restraint under any circumstances.

All staff will receive refresher training in the management of challenging behaviour every twelve months.

Staff who have not received such training should not work with students who may present physical challenges. If you are a new member of staff and you have not received the above training within six months of starting at RMET then you must inform your Supervisor or Neighbourhood Head.

Physical violence towards staff and other students is not an everyday occurrence at RMET. Self-injurious behaviour may be seen more regularly. Sophisticated premeditated violence is rare.

POLICY STATEMENT 20.

The use of any physical skill or intervention is not a substitute for good working practice, which includes proactive awareness and verbal de-escalation.

At RMET we try not to let situations get out of hand in the first place by identifying very early warning signs and being proactive before an incident has had a chance to develop. This is not always possible but even then we must still follow the set course of actions outlined below if we are grabbed or attacked:

- Try to back off
- Ask the student “what's the matter?”
- Ask the student to stop or let go
- Offer appropriate distractions
- Use physical skills to escape whilst still following 2 - 4
- Use physical intervention skills whilst still following 2 - 4

POLICY STATEMENT 21.

Remember! RMET does not want staff to use any physical skills unless absolutely necessary. They must be used as an absolute last resort. All staff must accept that physical interventions may pose dangers for students and staff. The use of any physical skill will always be evaluated post incident.

Because most of the violence is low key and unsophisticated, staff have been trained to react to the most common physically challenging behaviours in a way that will not escalate the situation. These situations are:

A. Escape procedures

- Hair grabs from the front, side and behind
- Protecting your airway if a student "bear hugs" or grabs your neck
- Grabs to the wrist
- Grabs to clothes
- Biting to major limbs
- Biting in awkward places
- Getting out of the way or blocking a slap, punch or kick.

B. Physical intervention

- Stopping a student injuring themselves
- Stopping a student injuring others when escape is not possible or others may be left at serious risk of harm
- Taking control of a situation in which a student/s is likely seriously to hurt themselves or others
- Moving a student around RMET

POLICY STATEMENT 22.

Procedures for dealing with the above situations are taught on the three day course on managing challenging behaviour. They are the only procedures approved for use within RMET. No other physical procedures are approved. Untrained staff must call for assistance if they find themselves in one of the above situations and then back off.

The use of weapons

POLICY STATEMENT 23.

The sophisticated use of weapons by students in RMET is very rare. Staff are not trained to take weapons off students and must not attempt to do so under any circumstances. Staff must clear the area and call for assistance from the Support and Attendance Co-ordinator and/or a Neighbourhood Head. Staff must monitor the situation from a safe distance and continue to use verbal de-escalation and diffusion strategies. If the student continues to threaten, then staff must call the police.

At RMET we do not classify crockery as a weapon. Sharp cutlery or craft tools used in an incident would be classified as a weapon

The use of physical restraint

POLICY STATEMENT 24.

RMET has a very strict policy concerning physical restraint. This can only be used when

- A student is self-harming
- A student is harming someone else

In both cases you must be sure that there is an immediate danger of physical damage to yourself before intervening. All staff must follow procedures taught on the three day management of challenging behaviour course or detailed when appropriate within a behaviour management plan. All one-person 'walkarounds' must be witnessed. All full restraints must only be undertaken by two members of staff and witnessed.

You must not restrain if property is being damaged but there is no danger to anyone. You may only use the physical restraint procedures taught on the three day course on managing challenging behaviour or detailed within the student's behaviour management plan.

RMET does not sanction the use of any prone floor restraints or any restraint that has not been approved for use within RMET.

Physical interventions and restraints will often impinge on our students' civil rights. Therefore:

- all physical interventions must be formally agreed through behaviour management planning meetings and be recorded
- must only involve physical skills learned on the Studio III/RMET training course on the management of challenging behaviour

- must be reported to the Support and Attendance Coordinator or Duty Manger as soon as is reasonably possible and written as a Serious Occurrence report within 24 hours of the incident.
- All staff must emphasise the duty of others to uphold the policy and to bring to the attention of the Neighbourhood Head any examples or concerns that the policy is not being upheld

Not adhering to the policy will be deemed a disciplinary matter.

To ensure the safety of individuals, emergency or urgent actions taken and not covered within this policy should be reported to a Neighbourhood Head or the Head of College as soon as is reasonably possible and no later than within 12 hours of the incident. This will be followed by a written Serious Occurrence report within 24 hours. The need for a full case conference will be considered. Parents, staff and placing authority will be informed at the earliest opportunity by the Neighbourhood Head, as outlined in RMET's Occurrence Reporting Protocol.

7. De-briefing

Working with challenging behaviour may evoke powerful emotional responses in staff.

POLICY STATEMENT 25.

RMET recognises that in the course of managing incidents, staff will become stressed.

RMET acknowledge that staff involved with the incident may wish to talk about the incident with colleagues.

RMET will support staff to receive post-incident de-briefing to help manage stress.

RMET will provide access to confidential and independent counselling if required.

Even if a member of staff appears to be calm following involvement in an incident, it is important for a designated person e.g. a Neighbourhood Head, to find time to allow them to debrief.

8. Reporting the incident

Under Health and Safety at Work and RIDDOR legislation, you have a legal obligation to report any incidents. You also have a duty to report incidents under the RMET Occurrence and Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy. Do this as soon after the incident as possible. This will help you recall the incident accurately.

POLICY STATEMENT 26.

It is a statutory responsibility for RMET to keep an incident record for each student and to report and record all incidents involving challenging behaviours directed towards staff, students, members of the public and property. In all cases staff must complete an Occurrence or Serious Occurrence Form. An Occurrence or Serious Occurrence form must also be filled in whenever an accident form is filled in.

Blank Occurrence and Serious Occurrence Report forms are available from the College office. Copies are also kept at each house.

Once completed, the Occurrence or Serious Occurrence form should be given to your Neighbourhood Head as soon as possible after you have de-briefed (if you have needed to) and at most within 24 hours of the incident.

Following any necessary action, the report will be filed in the student's personal file in the College office. Please fill in the Occurrence/Serious Occurrence report as accurately and with as much information as possible. Occurrence/Serious Occurrence reports provide RMET with the information needed to help prevent similar situations arising in the future. In some circumstances you may also be required to complete a behavioural analysis form following an incident. The designated Neighbourhood Head will inform you when this is the case.

9. Managing challenging behaviour in the community

Most of the advice in this policy has dealt with the management of challenging behaviours in RMET itself. A large part of our role is to encourage our students to use community-based services. It is therefore possible that incidents will occur in public settings.

Many incidents can be prevented by using your knowledge of the student's behaviour. In other words, if you know what can upset your student, you can avoid it. For example, some of our students may have difficulty with crowded or noisy places, or the experience of using community services may be new and strange. If you know this, take it into account. All this information will be in risk assessments or behaviour management plans drawn up for students.

POLICY STATEMENT 27.

Do not take a student out of RMET until you are fully aware of any risk assessments and behaviour management plans drawn up for that student.

It is advisable gradually to introduce students to these new settings by slowly increasing their exposure over time.

If a student is involved in an incident whilst outside of RMET premises you must ensure that you leave your contact details with any member of the public involved in the incident.

Where persistent management problems exist, students should not be brought more than a few hundred metres away from available transport. It is important to read the risk assessment and behaviour management plan as these will include more detailed information on approved strategies.

POLICY STATEMENT 28.

Only staff trained in moving students around must be used to calm down agitated students or help them board transport in public. Only trained staff should work with students with known and severe challenges in community settings. This will be identified in the independent travel risk assessment for each student.

It must be remembered that RMET staff should try to be courteous and polite to members of the public while managing incidents. It is helpful if staff carry appropriate identification when on outings with students.

10. What to do if you think a colleague is behaving inappropriately towards a student

Students are not to be physically restrained unless as an ‘absolute last resort’ or as part of an agreed individual reactive plan. Furthermore our students have the right not to be physically or mentally mistreated and to be kept safe from injury. Unfortunately some staff may abuse these rights and use physical restraint inappropriately.

POLICY STATEMENT 29.

It is the duty of all staff and a legal requirement to bring to the attention of the Neighbourhood Head, or in his/her absence the Head of College, any matter related to the physical restraint of a student which:

- Causes concern
- Is considered likely to be detrimental to the interests of students
- Appears to conflict with RMET’s duty of care to students.

This is consistent with the RMET Whistle blowing policy.

If you feel that your concern has not been adequately dealt with then you should contact a more senior person in the RMET directly.

In the event of an alleged incident, a Neighbourhood Head will initiate the procedures detailed in the Student Protection Policy.

Staff requiring further guidance on protecting students against abuse, are encouraged to read ‘No Secrets’ - Department of Health 2003. (A copy is available in the NH office)

12.8 SECTION 3 - SUPPORT FOR STAFF MEMBERS MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

POLICY STATEMENT 30.

RMET recognises the possibility of emergency situations arising where staff will decide to intervene out of “a duty of care” for a student. RMET will support staff through the possible consequences of their actions arising from such situations

1. When all else fails - a duty of care

At RMET we recognise that we are accountable to our students and that their interests are paramount.

A duty of care exists when duties and responsibilities are imposed upon professionals or paid staff. This means taking reasonable care to avoid situations or settings likely to cause harm to students, other staff or members of the public and acknowledging that certain courses of action may be risky. Judgments about what is or is not a "reasonable" course of action may be made with reference to the following:

- What would other staff with similar skills and responsibilities do in the situation?
- What would "experts" say about the risk?
- What is reasonable in the circumstances?
- What foreseeable risks are associated with a course of action?

The CSCI who are the overseeing service for RMET also suggest that you have a duty of care towards members of the public when you are directly caring for a student. It may be possible that you could be accused of negligence if a student is involved in an incident with a member of the public.

Within this policy we have tried to cover every eventuality but there may be times when you are going to have to use "reasonable judgement" i.e. common sense to manage an incident that is not covered within this policy, and is not covered by a risk assessment or behaviour management plan. What do you do if a student sits in the middle of the road outside a RMET college and a 32 ton lorry is bearing down on them? Do you:

- Scream at the student to get out of the way?
- Drag them out of the road even though they may get hurt?
- Stand back and watch?
- Go back to RMET for help?
- Faint?

The likelihood is that you will try to drag them out of the road even though you are putting yourself in great danger and will probably hurt the student in the process of moving them. To stand back and watch or faint etc. is almost certainly negligent on your behalf.

In a court of law, the following statements will be considered to establish if you may have been negligent in exercising your duty of care:

- Have you avoided areas of work which are difficult?
- Are you up to date with current practice and policies?
- Have you relied on other team members to "cover up" for you?
- Have you acknowledged the gaps between theory and practice in your own skills?
- Are you unclear about boundaries?
- Have you "burned out" - been in a high stress environment too long?
- Have you "rusted through" - been in a low level but recurring and persistently stressful environment too long?
- Do you rely on "gut feelings" without analysis?
- Do you blame the victim?

Your possible defence may be:

- The event was genuinely accidental
- The injury occurred as a result of a necessary act as a result of another's negligence
- A higher authority in RMET told you to leave the student in the road.
- An act of God was involved - this may be difficult to prove!!

2. Access to psychological de-briefing and counselling in the case of persistent trauma.

RMET recognize that involvement in the management of challenging behaviour can result in staff experiencing high levels of stress and in severe cases actual trauma. RMET will offer all staff who have experienced stress and trauma access to psychotherapy and counselling as appropriate.

13. RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

- 13.1 Policy Statement
- 13.2 Procedures
- 13.3 Staff implications

13.1 POLICY STATEMENT

RMET recognise that the health, safety and welfare of students are of paramount importance. RMET also recognise its duty of care to paid and unpaid staff and their immediate families. Within RMET and the wider community students will be exposed to risk from individuals, situations and settings that may impact on the ability of RMET to keep them safe. From time to time students may present a particular risk to staff, other students and the wider community that will need careful planned risk management. RMET will, to the best of its ability, assess all such risks, and develop strategies as a consequence of such risk assessment, to protect students, staff or the wider community as appropriate. It is the duty of RMET staff to be aware of and follow such risk assessments at all times.

13.2 PROCEDURES

Initial risk assessment will take place prior to the student commencing a placement at RMET as part of the Student Admissions Profile process.

Following admission to RMET, Neighbourhood Heads and individual Tutors will develop a series of risk assessments to cover day and educational provision at RMET.

Following admission to RMET, Houseparents, Homeproviders or Residential support workers in co-operation with Neighbourhood Heads will develop a series of risk assessments to cover home and extra-curricular provision at RMET

Although the format of each risk assessment will differ between college and home each risk assessment will contain the following information:

- Name of student
- Person conducting risk assessment
- Sources of information
- Overall objective of risk assessment
- What is the nature of the risk involved?
- Severity of risk - mild, moderate, severe, very severe, dangerous
- Occurrence likelihood - highly unlikely, unlikely, may occur, likely, highly likely
- Risk factors known to increase and decrease risk and evidence of circumstances and environment, access, opportunity and consistent proximity, high risk situations, issues which increase risk
- Steps to be taken to minimise risk
- Procedures if risk is assessed as being too high
- In what ways will the student benefit from achieving the goal?
- Do other people need to be consulted?
- Who else should be informed?
- How is the risk assessment to be monitored?
- What are the student's individual strengths and positive feelings which may help reduce the risks?

- What guidance has this student already received?
- Specific management/treatment plans that can best reduce these risks
- Date of review

13.3 STAFF IMPLICATIONS

RMET will support all staff following risk assessments to the best of its ability.

Failure to read or comply with a risk assessment may result in disciplinary procedures or dismissal.

14. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

- 14.1 Policy Statement
- 14.2 Responsibilities
- 14.3 Arrangements
- 14.4 Safety Management and Systems

14.1 POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of RMET to provide, maintain and develop working conditions and environments in all its Colleges which guarantee the health and safety of all students, employees and any other persons who could be affected by our work, as far as is reasonably practicable. The Safety systems and procedures in place have been developed focusing on the needs and development potential of our students, who are the reason for the RMET's existence. This core value, known as the "Safe Learner" concept, is one which must always be kept central to thinking within the various Colleges.

We assess all significant risks and provide information, training, supervision, equipment and safe systems as needed to maintain and develop the safety-knowledge and awareness of both students and staff. Above all we are totally committed to the principle that Health and Safety is a practical, everyday part of ALL work - not an intellectual exercise without practical application.

14.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees hold ultimate responsibility for Health and Safety across the Trust.

In each establishment the Heads of College have overall responsibility for Health and Safety within their respective areas, including allocation of adequate resources to maintain and improve safety standards and facilities.

All supervisory staff and tutors are responsible for Health and Safety in their own areas.

All staff and students are responsible for taking reasonable care for their own safety and that of anyone else who could be affected by their actions. To do this they should:

- Follow any safety training or instructions given, and adhere to safety signs displayed.
- Avoid damaging, interfering with or losing any safety equipment.
- Tell a member of staff if they believe something is dangerous.
- Ask a tutor or other member of staff if unsure how to do a job safely.

14.3 ARRANGEMENTS

Safety Advisers. Each establishment has a nominated Safety Adviser, who is trained, or in training, to NEBOSH general certificate level, or equivalent. Their role includes advising on Safety matters, assisting area safety officers or other staff in preparing risk assessments, other safety documentation and control measures and ensuring consideration is always given to the needs of our students and their development. They also act as employee representatives for the purposes of

consultation on safety matters and attend H&S management meetings. It should be noted that it is NOT their duty to prepare Risk Assessments for specific areas, unless specifically instructed to do so by the Heads of College - this duty lies with the tutor responsible for the area.

Work Experience. Additionally within each college there is a nominated tutor responsible for organising, vetting and monitoring ALL external work experience and course placements for students. This is done in accordance with LSC guidelines, again with the developmental needs and targets of our students as the primary focus.

Safety Officers. Within each vocational area within a college there is a nominated Safety Officer, who has sufficient knowledge and experience to assist their colleagues in assessing risks, recording these appropriately and developing control measures and strategies which will prove effective with and for our students.

College Nurses. Within each College the College Nurse is involved in assisting and advising on any matters relating to students' medical or health needs, including advising staff and liaising with Doctors on medication requirements, secure storage and administration.

External Safety Advisers. Each College has access to qualified and competent external safety advisers. They are used to carry out periodic inspections and audits and provide any additional assistance which the senior management feels cannot competently be provided in-house.

Safety Administrators. A nominated person in each college, usually the Personnel Administrator, keeps central copies of all safety-related documentation, additionally to any held by Safety Advisers, Officers or tutors. This includes copies of all assessments and the College H & S reference manual. This nominated person also implements any accident or incident reporting needed to the LSC and Enforcing Authority.

14.4 SAFETY MANAGEMENT AND SYSTEMS.

Further to the RMET General Policy on Health and Safety the following Health and Safety guidance is held within RMET:

- Ruskin Mill College, Glasshouse College and Freeman College specific Health and Safety Guidelines
- Residential Houses Health and Safety Policy Guidelines
- Vocational placement Health and Safety Guidelines
- Individual student and vocational activity risk assessment processes
- First Aid provision and procedure
- Accident reporting procedures
- Fire Precautions - provision and procedure
- Inspection regimes - provision and procedure

Designated Health and Safety Officers at Ruskin Mill, Glasshouse College and Freeman College also receive Health and Safety training as required.

Work Experience management procedures and any other Safety related matters are contained within each college's own policies and managed and developed accordingly within that college.

15. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT POLICY

15.1 Policy Statement

15.2 Quality Assurance Rationale for RMET's Ruskin Mill Orientation Course

15.3 The Neighbourhood Head Team

15.4 The Tutor Mentor/Department Head Team

15.5 The Educational Planning Cycle (EPC) QA Team

15.6 The Quality Improvement Cycle

56.1 POLICY STATEMENT

RMET recognise that procedures for the protection of children and vulnerable adults at RMET Colleges, in order to ensure that students stay healthy and keep safe, will only be effective if delivered within an organisational structure of the highest quality. RMET therefore believe that the quality of service offered by RMET is best maintained and improved within the following framework.

15.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE RATIONALE FOR RMET'S RUSKIN MILL ORIENTATION COURSE

RMET assures the quality its extended curriculum through the work of the following teams:

The Neighbourhood Head team who are responsible for assuring the quality of the residential provision and the Annual Review process

The Tutor Mentor (RMC)/Department Head (at GHC & FMC) Team who ensure that effective teaching and learning is taking place within the Ruskin Mill Orientation Course delivered

The Educational Planning Cycle (EPC) QA team who quality assure the content of each student's individual learning programme for relevance and accuracy.

15.3 THE NEIGHBOURHOOD HEAD TEAM

The **Neighbourhood Heads (NH)** and Day Student Head are a team of middle managers in each college who meet weekly with the Heads of College to review the provision made for individual students.

Day Student Head

The Day Student Head is responsible for overseeing provision for all day students.

Neighbourhoods

The NHs are each responsible for overseeing provision for the residential students who live in the neighbourhood they supervise. They regularly inspect the residential provision and have organisational responsibility for the residential workers in their neighbourhoods.

Annual Staff (Houseparents) Reviews

Neighbourhood Heads conduct the annual staff reviews for the Houseparents working in their neighbourhood.

Annual Student Reviews

The Neighbourhood Heads are also responsible for chairing the annual review meetings for students who live in their neighbourhoods.

15.4 THE TUTOR MENTOR/DEPARTMENT HEAD TEAM

This team consists of senior tutors from a variety of work areas. The **Tutor Mentor Team**(at RMC)or **Department Head Team**(at GHC & FMC) meets regularly and reports to the Heads of College

The team is responsible for:

- Monitoring the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning on the Ruskin Mill Orientation Course
- Leading tutor teams/departments
- Acting as a consultative group for reviewing the educational provision.

Quality assurance of teaching and learning

Each Tutor mentor/Department Head has a group of between eight and ten staff whose sessions they will observe at least two times a year. They will use their observations to check on the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning. The Tutor Mentor/Department Head will be responsible for following up on, implementing and reviewing the action plan that has been generated by a session observation.

Tutor Team Leader

Tutors at RMET colleges are divided into small teams/departments, largely linked to their work area. Each Tutor Mentor/Department Head is responsible for leading a team.

Team Leaders meet regularly with their team with the aim of providing a regular forum for consultation and information, which includes cascading information on changing policies, procedures or practice and ensuring that each team member is up to date with developments within the college.

Annual Staff Review

Tutor Mentors/Department Heads conduct the annual staff reviews for the tutors whose sessions they observe. The staff review report is submitted to the personnel department for filing. The actions from each staff review are followed up by the Tutor Mentor/Department Head, who is also responsible for reporting the relevant actions to the Head of College - Education, who will address any significant issues or concerns.

It is expected that the Tutor Mentor/Department Head will address issues around basic working practice such as hours of work, health and safety, and completing paperwork.

15.5 THE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING CYCLE (EPC) QA TEAM

This team consists of tutors, administrators and Houseparents, who are responsible for monitoring the quality of RMET's evidence of assessing, planning and recording learner achievement (this framework is referred to as the Educational Planning Cycle or EPC and is mapped to the LSC RARPA framework).

At the end of each term, the EPC QA team review the EPC paperwork for each student, making comments on the quality of the reports, tutor by tutor. The team then visits the tutors and Houseparents and checks the following:

Is the paperwork for each student being completed?

Are the targets being set SMART?

Are the strategies for achieving the targets realistic and achievable?

Does the end of term report provide information about progress and achievement?

The EPC QA team will feedback any practical concerns to Team Leaders and will also work with Team Leaders to provide additional support and training for individual tutors as needed.

15.6 THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

In addition to the above provision for Quality Assurance of the Ruskin Mill Orientation Course (RMOC), RMET colleges implement a Quality improvement Cycle that is aligned with the LSC requirement for continuous organisational review and planning.

16. COMPLAINTS POLICY

16.1 Policy Statement

16.2 Concerning a student wishing to make a complaint.

16.3 Concerning complaints from outside parties about RMET's arrangements for a student.

16.1 POLICY STATEMENT

RMET unconditionally support the rights of every student to make complaints about RMET and any of its Trustees, paid or unpaid staff, other users or visitors to any RMET premises. RMET will also assist students if they wish to make complaints against individuals, services or organisations not directly connected to RMET, by referring the student to the agency best placed to support the student's complaint

RMET unconditionally support the rights of every member of paid or unpaid staff to make complaints against RMET and any of its Trustees, paid or unpaid staff, other users or visitors to any RMET premises and recommends staff read the appropriate section of the staff handbook in order to pursue their complaint.

16.2 CONCERNING A STUDENT WISHING TO MAKE A COMPLAINT.

It is the responsibility of the student's Personal Tutor to ensure that the student knows that it is their right to speak to their Personal Tutor, residential worker or Neighbourhood Head in connection with any matter about which they wish to complain. They should also ensure that such a complaint will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

The recipient of a complaint must record in writing the complaint in full and any action taken in the residential setting or at college. The complaint must always be passed on to the RMET Heads of College. An account of the complaint must be entered into the Complaints Log and no records may be destroyed.

Students may make an appointment to see or telephone the RMET Heads of College at any time if they wish their complaint to be dealt with urgently.

It is the responsibility of the residential worker to ensure that students have access at all times, with reasonable privacy, to a telephone in their residential settings. Students will be informed of relevant telephone numbers such as Childline.

If a student is not satisfied with the action taken within RMET then a letter must be written from the RMET Heads of College to the student's Social Service Department or referring agency, and (if the student wishes) his/her parents, detailing the complaint and the action taken so far. A meeting will then be arranged with the outside parties to resolve the matter.

16.3 CONCERNING COMPLAINTS FROM OUTSIDE PARTIES ABOUT THE RMET'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR A STUDENT.

The complainant should be asked to contact the RMET Heads of College and if this is not possible then the person who receives the complaint must give a written report to the Principal or Director as soon possible and he or she will contact the complainant to attempt to resolve the matter. A letter must be written from RMET to the student's Social Service Department or referring agency detailing the complaint and action taken. A meeting may be called to discuss the RMET's policies and procedures and to review the student's placement. At this point an independent assessment may be sought from an outside body.

17. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

17.1 Policy Statement

17.2 General background

17.3 Legal background of the RMET Equal Opportunities and Race Equality Policies

17.4 RMET Equal Opportunities Policy

17.5 Legal framework, The Disability Discrimination Act Part 4

17.6 Equal opportunities practice at RMET Colleges

17.7 Publishing and promoting the Policy

17.8 RMET Race Equality Policy

17.1 POLICY STATEMENT

RMET wish to promote the mainstreaming of Equality and Diversity into all planning processes and functions at RMET and to support Equality and Diversity good practice and initiatives across RMET.

RMET will:

- Develop and support the implementation of policies and procedures that promote Equality and Diversity
- Work closely with schools, units, departments and services that support staff and students in order to promote awareness of Equality and Diversity
- Support staff and students with key projects and initiatives that promote equality and diversity
- Train and brief key staff on equality and diversity areas
- Offer advice and support to individual staff and students
- Ensure that all policies are consistent with latest legal requirements

17.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND

Ruskin Mill Educational Trust (RMET) provides specialist further education facilities and services for young men and women aged between 16 and 25 who are unable to access regular further educational provision in their local college because of learning difficulties or disabilities associated with disturbed or challenging behaviour.

RMET operates three specialist further education colleges, Ruskin Mill College in Gloucestershire, Glasshouse College in the West Midlands and Freeman College in South Yorkshire. At all colleges a high proportion of the students receive residential provision and are placed by authorities throughout the UK. Placements are generally for the college terms (36 weeks), but residential placement during college holidays (RPCH) is available throughout the year. About 20% of the students make use of some or all of the 16 weeks of RPCH.

The educational and therapeutic philosophy that underlies the work of the RMET has been developed in relation to the insights of Rudolf Steiner, William Morris and John Ruskin.

RMET policy is to ensure that students learn strategies to manage their disability and develop their life skills to their maximum potential.

RMET staff members have access to training and professional development regardless of gender, creed, marital status, age, national ethnic origin or disability.

17.3 LEGAL BACKGROUND OF THE RMET EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RACE EQUALITY POLICIES

The College Equal Opportunities and Race Equality Policies have been constructed in order to comply with the requirements of the following relevant legislation:

- The Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986.
- The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- The Equal Pay Act 1970 (amended 1983).
- The Disabled Persons Employment Act 1944 and 1958.
- The Companies Regulations (1980) Employment of Disabled persons.
- The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005

All RMET policies are available for inspection.

Any perceived deficiencies in the implementation of the Equal Opportunities or Race Equality Policies can be referred to the RMET Council of Management. Breaches of these policies will be dealt with in accordance with the RMET's discipline and grievance procedures.

These policies were most recently updated in October 2005. They will next be reviewed in October 2007, unless there are any changes in legislative framework before then.

17.4 RMET EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

RMET's statement of intent regarding equal opportunities:

- RMET is an equal opportunities employer.
- RMET Colleges are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all.

RMET is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities in all aspects of its services. RMET will seek to ensure that no person, whether a job applicant, employee, student or volunteer receives any less favourable treatment in respect of gender, marital status, age, ethnic origin, disability, nationality, creed or sexual orientation. RMET believes that all forms of prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable. RMET will seek to challenge inequality on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

It is the responsibility of every person involved in an RMET College to ensure that the policy is implemented fully by making sure that they do not discriminate in their daily contact with each other. In addition all members of the college community should be aware that they have a duty to uphold equal opportunities principles.

17.5 LEGAL FRAMEWORK, THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT PART 4

Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act relates to post 16 education and places responsibilities on educational providers not to discriminate against a disabled student or potential student for a reason related to their disability. The legal responsibility for ensuring discrimination does not take place lies with the RMET trustees.

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a disabled person in the following ways:

- in admissions or enrolment of students
- in the terms on which admissions offers are made
- by refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application for admission
- in the provision of services provided wholly or mainly for students. This includes provision such as courses, training, recreation, leisure and catering facilities and accommodation.

Discrimination against disabled applicants or students can take place in the following two ways:

- By treating them less favourably than other people or
- By failing to make a reasonable adjustment when they are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other people for a reason related to their disability. A reasonable adjustment might be an action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage. Under the Act, there is a responsibility to make anticipatory adjustments. This means that institutions should consider what adjustments future disabled students or applicants may need, and make them in advance.

17.6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PRACTICE AT RMET COLLEGES

Regarding marketing and publicity:

- RMET publicity will reflect equality of opportunity and be free of bias and stereotypical images. Where possible positive role models of under-represented groups will be presented. RMET colleges will seek to ensure that all such groups receive materials which are appropriate to their needs.
- RMET will ensure that staff and students are informed of the equal opportunities policy through training and appropriate publications e.g. the handbook for staff and the information booklet for students. Agencies involved with students or staff will be informed by publications e.g. RMET brochure and website.

Regarding access and environment:

- RMET operates a thorough admissions and initial assessment process which works with guidelines and criteria published in the booklet RMET - A General Introduction and in the RMET Statement of Purpose. The assessment of

applicant students is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act Part 4.

- RMET will endeavour to make the admissions process transparent and accessible to all who are involved in it. College staff will make every effort to ensure that non-biased advice on the provision offered at the RMET colleges is available to students and those who support them.
- Prospective students will be informed of the support and counselling services provided for current students.
- All signs, regulations, communications and instructions will be as clear and simple as possible and free from discriminatory language.
- Every effort will be made to encourage participation from under-represented groups.

Regarding curriculum content and delivery:

- Each student at a RMET College has an individual programme and an associated individual learning plan. The students are involved in the design of the programme and the learning plan, which are monitored and adjusted on a regular basis, at least once each term.
- The individual programmes are developed on the basis of a differentiated curriculum (i.e. a curriculum offering a range of learning activities at a range of levels) using a range of appropriate resources.
- Assessment, consultation, support and guidance will be available to all students in order that they have equal opportunities to fulfil their potential by following their programme at the college. Such guidance will be available from Neighbourhood Heads, Personal Tutors and Houseparents,
- RMET Colleges will endeavour not to use discriminatory material. If such material is found to come from an external source, then the college will make its views known.
- Allocation of resources will reflect the commitment of the college to ensuring that, within the available funds, all courses are appropriately resourced and that all students have an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Regarding staff recruitment and conditions of service:

- Recruitment and appointment of staff will be carried out in accordance with legal requirements and good equal opportunities practice.
- All vacancies will be subject to open competition, either through internal advertisement in the College newsletter or through advertisement in the press.
- Job Descriptions are produced for all posts and minimum criteria will be made available to disabled applicants. RMET Colleges will always consider disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a particular post.
- RMET Colleges will make every effort should an employee become disabled or their disability become worse, to ensure that they will have the college's support to enable them to continue in their current job or, should this not prove possible, that an alternative position will be found. The Personnel Co-ordinator is available to assist staff in obtaining resources and advice regarding adaptations to working environment or specialist equipment required.
- All those involved in recruitment will be advised and trained on the implementation of the recruitment policy.

Regarding staff development:

- RMET Colleges provide regular staff meetings and staff training sessions to enable staff members to:
 - Take part in general induction
 - Gain an understanding of the RMET operating procedure,
 - Gain an understanding of the RMET ethos,
 - Gain an understanding of the needs of the client group,
 - Take up opportunities to gain appropriate qualifications
- RMET colleges arrange annual staff reviews, together with opportunities for regular supervision and group supervision.
- RMET Colleges arrange opportunities for staff members to engage in personal and professional development through courses organised other than by RMET
- All staff members are made aware of the RMET policies, including the equal opportunity policy, both through access to the Staff Manual, where the policies are published, and through staff training sessions.

Regarding Harassment:

- Everyone is entitled to be treated with courtesy and respect. RMET will not accept behaviour towards people which is objectionable and offensive, or which might threaten their security, or create an intimidating or hostile environment, which may hinder their performance.
- Any alleged incidents of harassment will be dealt with according to the College's agreed procedures.

17.7 PUBLISHING AND PROMOTING THE POLICY

This Policy is published in the Student Protection Policy document and open for examination to all students, parents, members of the public and placing authorities.

17.8 RMET RACE EQUALITY POLICY

The Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Regulations 2003 gives further education colleges a statutory duty to promote race equality. The aim of the duty is to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote racial equality
- promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups.

This policy, which complements the Equal Opportunities Policy, has been developed to meet the specific duty to have a Race Equality Policy and to keep that Policy up to date.

Racism, Racial Harassment and College Ethos

RMET Colleges:

- oppose all forms of racism, racial prejudice, racial harassment and racial discrimination.
- publicly value and support diversity through a range of activities including curriculum.
- cater for the dietary and dress requirements of different religious groups and enable students to observe festivals and events relevant to their faith.

- will actively promote good personal and community relations by fostering a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among students from all racial groups.
- have procedures for dealing with, recording and reporting incidents of racial harassment and bullying.
- will ensure that incidents of racial discrimination involving students will be dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently in accordance with RMET's disciplinary procedures and that actions will be taken to support victims.
- will work with partner agencies to tackle racism and racial harassment.
- will ensure that all staff will be given appropriate training and support to enable them to deal effectively with racial incidents and racial harassment and that such behaviour is always unacceptable.
- will ensure that incidents of racial discrimination or racial harassment involving staff will be dealt with in accordance with the College's discipline and grievance procedures.

Responsibilities held by specific staff members

The RMET Trustees and Council of Management is responsible:

- for ensuring that the RMET Colleges fulfil their legal responsibilities including those arising from the Race Relations Amendment Act and that the Colleges comply with the Race Relations legislation, including the general and specific duties arising from the Race Relations Amendment Regulations 2003.
- with the assistance of the SMT at each College, for ensuring that the policy and its related procedures are implemented.

The RMET Trustees and Council of Management will:

- in partnership with SMT at each College, be proactive in promoting racial equality and good race relations and tackling unlawful racial discrimination
- in collaboration with SMT at each College, encourage, support and enable all students and staff to reach their full potential.

The SMT at each College is responsible:

- with the RMET Trustees and Council of Management, for ensuring that the policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy and that they are given appropriate training and support to enable them to fulfil these responsibilities.
- for taking disciplinary action against staff or students who racially discriminate.

The SMT at each College will:

- co-ordinate racial equality work.
- deal with reported incidents of racism and racial harassment.
- ensure compliance with the Race Equality Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy.

All staff at RMET Colleges are responsible for:

- ensuring that students from all racial groups are included in all activities and have full access to the curriculum.
- promoting racial equality and diversity through teaching and the relationships they develop with students, staff, parents and the wider community.

All staff are aware of:

- how to deal with racist incidents and how to identify and challenge racial bias and stereotyping.
- their duty to promote racial equality, promote good relations and challenge discrimination.
- the need to keep themselves up to date with race relations legislation.

Aims of the racial equality policy

RMET Colleges are committed to:

- promoting racial equality, good race relations and challenging racial discrimination.
- ensuring that RMET Colleges are places where everyone, irrespective of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin or their citizenship, feel welcome and valued and able to achieve their full potential.
- protecting the rights of all students, staff, parents and visitors to the colleges.
- respecting and valuing differences between people.
- meeting the diverse needs of the students.
- preparing students for life in a multiethnic society.
- acknowledging the existence of racism and being proactive in tackling and eliminating racial discrimination.

Implementation of the policy

RMET Colleges will implement the policy:

- through the inclusion of a race equality perspective in strategic planning.
- by providing appropriate training for staff.
- by ensuring that the whole college is aware of, and understands, the need to promote racial equality, develop good race relations and challenge discrimination.

Policy Planning and Review

RMET Colleges will ensure that:

- questions related to race equality will be built into College development planning.
- ethnic monitoring data on admissions will be used to inform planning and decision-making.

Regarding admissions

The College will ensure that:

- admissions policy and criteria do not disadvantage potential students from particular racial groups and that action will be taken to remove any inequalities that are identified.
- comprehensive information about the potential student's ethnicity, first language and religion will be included in all pre-entry assessment details.
- the admissions process will be monitored by ethnicity to ensure that it is administered consistently and fairly to all potential students.
- provision will be made for leave of absence for religious observance for staff as well as students.

Regarding attainment, progress and assessment

RMET Colleges:

- have high expectations of all students and are committed to encouraging and enabling all students to achieve the highest possible standards.
- recognise and value all forms of achievement and give recognition to those who achieve their full potential.
- will monitor assessments to ensure that they are, as far as possible, free of cultural or linguistic bias.

Regarding behaviour, discipline and exclusions

RMET Colleges will:

- monitor exclusions by ethnicity
- take appropriate action to remove any disparities in rates of exclusion between students from different racial groups.

Regarding curriculum

RMET Colleges will ensure that:

- elements of the curriculum are planned to incorporate the principles of racial equality, challenging racism and promoting positive attitudes towards diversity.
- all students have access to the curriculum
- activities and events will cater for the interests and capabilities of all students.

Regarding staff recruitment and professional development

RMET Colleges will ensure that:

- all staff are encouraged to develop and achieve their full potential.
- all colleges have procedures to ensure that applicants for jobs or professional development opportunities are not discriminated against on racial grounds.
- all those involved in recruitment and selection will be trained and aware of what they should do to avoid racial discrimination.
- applicants for posts will be monitored by ethnicity.

Monitoring the policies

SMTs at each college meet regularly and are responsible for the promotion, development, monitoring and review of equal opportunities policies generally within their college.

Each College's SMT will ensure the effectiveness of these Policies by:

- monitoring the recruitment process
- taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding Equal Opportunity issues.

Each college's SMT will also:

- analyse information gathered with regard to equal opportunities issues and specific areas of under-representation.
- relate this evidence to marketing, recruitment and selection procedures.
- review College procedures and publications for bias.