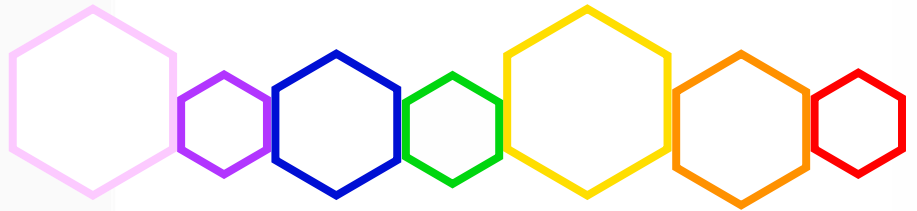




Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

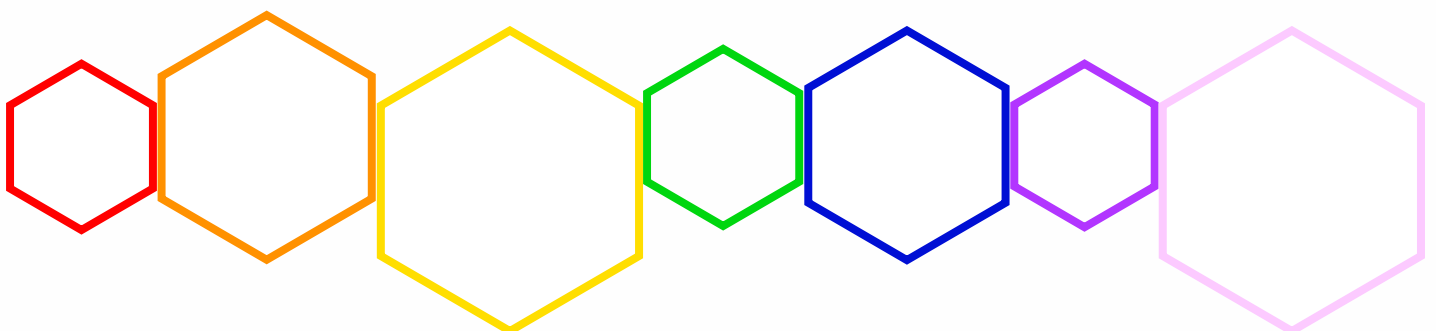


RCS Complaints Handling Procedure

Student and Child Friendly Summary

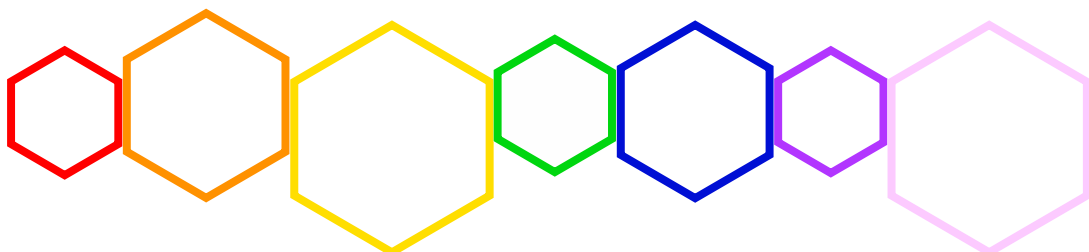
We hope that this summary will make it easier for children under the age of 18 to access our complaints procedure.

While this summary has been written for people under 18, it may be useful for anyone who wishes to raise a complaint, including adults.



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What is the child friendly complaints process?

The child friendly complaints process is a process developed by the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO).

This was developed with the input of children of all ages to make sure that complaints procedures in education in Scotland are meeting children's needs. It is underpinned by the principles shown below.

This means that when a child raises a complaint - or when an adult raises a complaint on behalf of a child or about matters affecting a child - we will follow the SPSO's guidance and principles.



Why raise a complaint?

1

It gives us a chance to fix things when something has gone wrong.

It helps us to improve the service that we are providing to you and others.

2

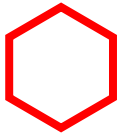
3

It means that we can learn from our mistakes so the same thing doesn't happen again.

It helps us to do a better job next time.

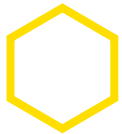
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Do I have to raise a complaint to get help?



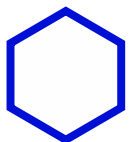
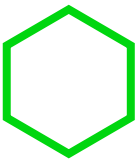
You don't have to raise a complaint to get help.

If something has gone wrong, we would encourage you to raise a complaint because this means that you will be kept updated on what is being done to fix the problem, and you will receive a detailed response.



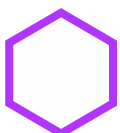
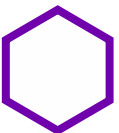
OTHER OPTIONS

If you would prefer not to raise a complaint, that's okay. We can still help.



You can speak with any member of staff you feel comfortable with and ask if they can help to resolve the issue informally.

The staff member will ask you what you would like to happen to fix the problem. They can explore options with you if you're not sure. They will agree the next steps with you before they do anything.



What is a complaint?

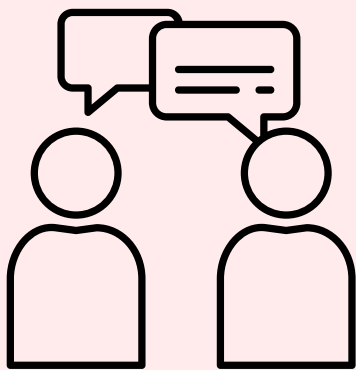


A complaint might be about any of the things listed here, or it might be about something else. Complaints about another student's behaviour are usually handled under our student disciplinary procedure instead of our complaints procedure.

How can I raise a complaint?

In person -

with any trusted member of staff.



Email -

complaint@rcs.ac.uk



Phone -

0141 332 4101.

Ask to be put through to the complaints team in the AAS office.



Letter -

Complaints, AAS Office,
Royal Conservatoire of
Scotland,
100 Renfrew Street, Glasgow,
G2 3DB.



Include your name and contact details if you would like someone to get in touch with you about it.

Complaint form on the website -

Follow this [link](https://www.rcs.ac.uk/complaints/) or copy and paste this web address into your browser:

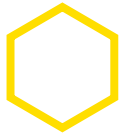
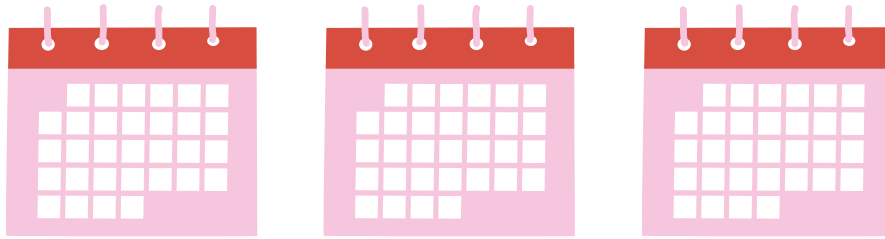
<https://www.rcs.ac.uk/complaints/>



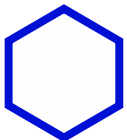
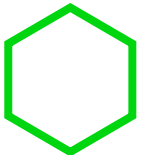
www.

What if the problem happened a long time ago?

We usually need people to raise a complaint within 6 months of first knowing about the problem.

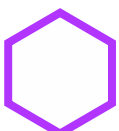
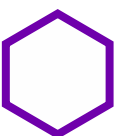


We understand that sometimes people might wait longer than this to raise a complaint, and may try to fix things on their own first.



If the complaint is about something that happened more than 6 months ago, we might still be able to help, especially if the complaint is about something serious.

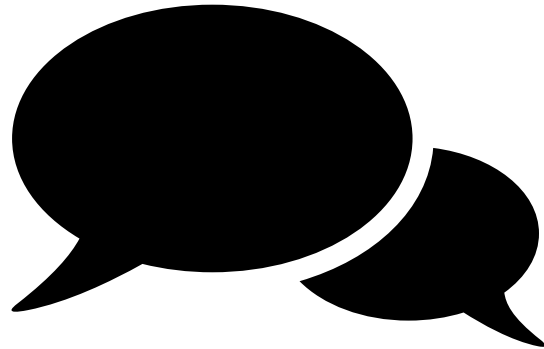
We would encourage you to raise the complaint even if the problem happened a long time ago.



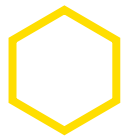
Process: What will happen when I raise a complaint?



First Discussion

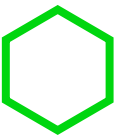


The staff member you have spoken with (or the person who receives your complaint) will:



a) speak with you about your complaint and ask if they can take some notes

b) write down the points of your complaint if you agree



c) ask what you would like to happen next to fix the problem

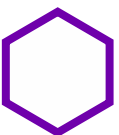
d) ask if there is an adult you would like to involve in the process - for example, a parent or guardian

e) ask how you would like to be updated

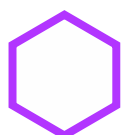


e) ask if you are happy for RCS to handle your complaint

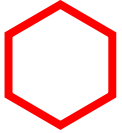
f) agree the next steps with you before doing anything



We will have this discussion with you within 3 working days of the complaint being raised. What happens next will depend on how serious the complaint is and what you would like to happen to fix the problem. This is explained more on the next three pages.



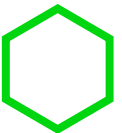
The complaints procedure has two stages. We might try to fix the problem using one or both of these stages.



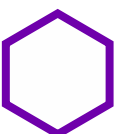
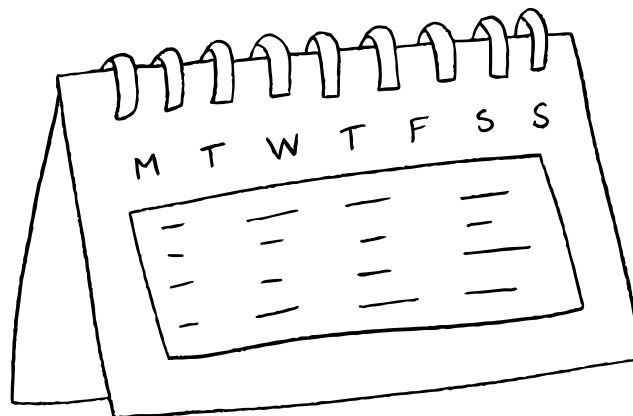
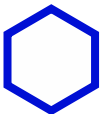
Stage 1 - Frontline Response



Where the complaint is simple and the problem can be fixed quickly, this can be handled at Stage 1 if you agree to this.



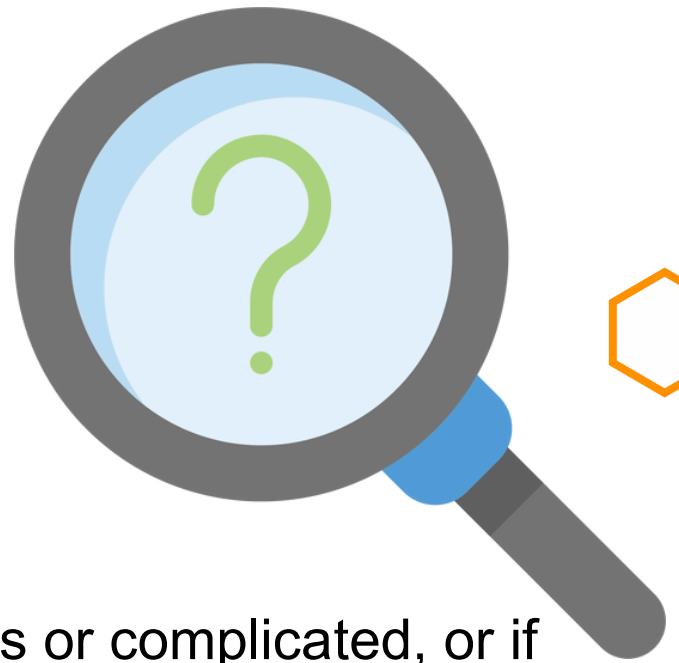
This might be the case if an apology, an explanation, or a small change would fix the problem.



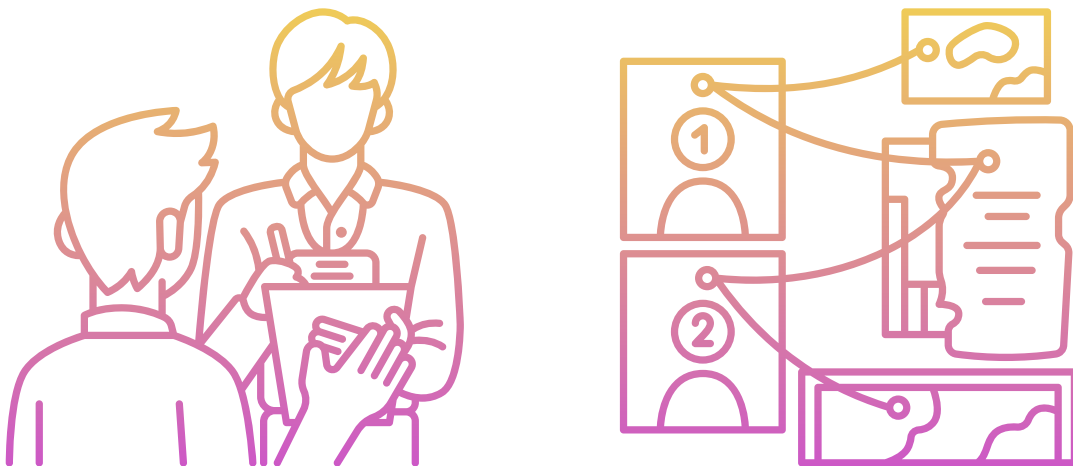
We will aim to give you a response within 5 working days (working days are Monday to Friday). Sometimes this might take up to 10 working days.



Stage 2 - Investigation



If the complaint is serious or complicated, or if there are lots of different points we need to look into to try to fix the problem, then we will investigate the complaint if you agree to this.


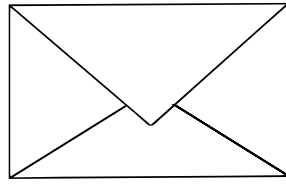


This means we will take some time to look into the issues. This might involve speaking with other members of staff - we will always tell you who we are planning to speak with.

You will receive an outcome within 20 working days. Sometimes more time is needed. If we think this might be the case, we will let you know when you raise the complaint.

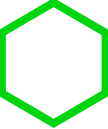



Outcomes




We will usually send you an email with an outcome letter so you have this information in writing (unless you have told us that you would like to be told about it a different way).

The letter will tell you:


- 
- a) whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld, not upheld, or resolved
 - b) why this decision has been made
 - c) what we did, or what we will do, to try to fix things



We will also ask if you would like to have an outcome discussion. This means you can speak with us about the outcome in person and ask any questions you might have. If you are under 18 and would like more information about how decisions were made, you can ask us for a decision letter.



If the complaint is resolved, we will ask you if you are happy with this outcome. The complaint can only be resolved if you agree that it is.



What do the outcomes mean?

When we look into a complaint, we are trying to answer three questions:

- 1) What happened?
- 2) What should have happened?
- 3) Is there a difference between these two things, and is the Conservatoire responsible for this?

The answers to these questions help us to decide on the outcome. The outcomes mean:

Upheld - There is a difference between what happened and what should have happened, and the Conservatoire is responsible for this.

Partially Upheld - There is a difference between what happened and what should have happened in relation to some parts of the complaint, and the Conservatoire is responsible, or partly responsible, for this.

Not Upheld - There is no difference between what happened and what should have happened. Or, there is a difference, but the Conservatoire is not responsible for this.


Resolved - We were able to fix the problem, or we did something else to make the situation better. You agree that the issue is resolved, and we can stop looking into the complaint.

What if I'm not happy with the outcome?



Stage 1 - Frontline Response

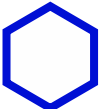
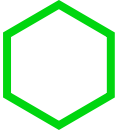
If you're not happy with the outcome of a complaint at Stage 1, you can ask us to look at it again at Stage 2.



Stage 2 - Investigation


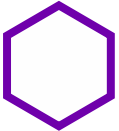
Once we have investigated a complaint at Stage 2, we can't look into the complaint again.

If you're not happy with the outcome at Stage 2, you can get in touch with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).



The SPSO are the final stage for complaints about education in Scotland. They can look into service failings and whether we followed our complaints procedure the right way when handling your complaint.

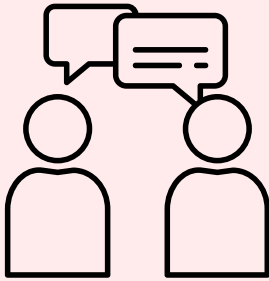
If you would like to contact the SPSO, you should do this within 1 year of getting the Stage 2 outcome. The SPSO can't look into the issue if it is being handled in court.



How can I contact the SPSO?

In person -

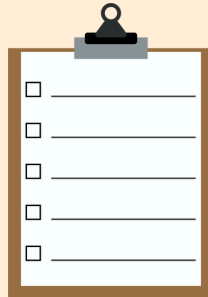
contact them on the phone or using the contact form to arrange an appointment.



Online contact form -

click the link or copy and paste it into your browser:

<https://www.spsso.org.uk/contact-form>



Freephone -

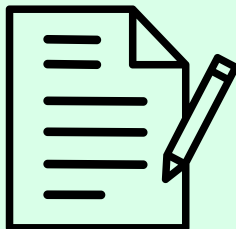
0800 377 7330.
Calls are free.



Letter -

Free post SPSO (you don't need to use a stamp).

SPSO Bridgeside House,
99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh,
EH7 4NS



Include your name and contact details so they can get in touch with you.

Online complaint form -

Follow this link or copy and paste this web address into your browser:

www.spsso.org.uk/complain



Or, visit the website for more information:

www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

www.spsso.org.uk

I need help to make a complaint or contact the SPSO



Responsible Adult

You can ask a parent or guardian, or another responsible adult, to help you with this.



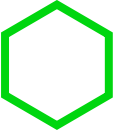
Support from RCS

You can ask a trusted member of staff or the Student Union (SU@rcs.ac.uk) to help with this.



Advocacy

You might also wish to get help from an independent advocate (someone who does not work for RCS or the SPSO).

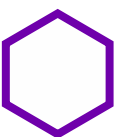


An advocate is someone who can help you through the complaint process. Sometimes advocates can put a complaint forward on your behalf.



You might be able to get help from these organisations:

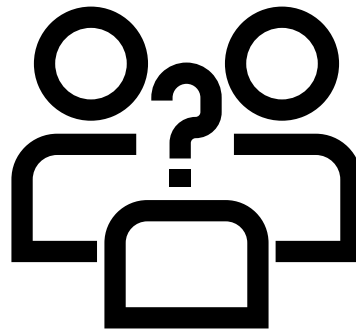
- Citizens Advice Scotland
- Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance



Do I need to include my name on the complaint?

It is easier for us to handle your complaint if you tell us who you are. This is because the staff dealing with the complaint might need to talk to you about what happened and what you would like to happen next.

Sometimes when people submit a complaint, they prefer not to include their name or contact details.



If you would like to submit a complaint this way, you should include lots of information about what has happened and what you would like us to do about it.

When this happens, we will decide whether we have enough information to look into it. If there is not enough information, we won't be able to handle the complaint, but we will still take a record of it.

If you haven't included your name or contact details, we won't be able to give you updates or let you know what has happened with your complaint. If we are handling the complaint, we won't be able to tell you what is being done to try to fix the problem.

Who will know that I've raised a complaint?

Your complaint is confidential. This means that we will keep it private. We won't speak with other students or staff about it unless you have agreed to this.



If we need to speak to anyone else to handle your complaint, we will tell you who we would like to speak with and why. If you would prefer we didn't speak to certain people, we will take this into consideration.

In rare cases, we might need to tell someone else about your complaint even if you have asked us not to. This might happen if the complaint includes information about harm or abuse, a crime, or if we believe that your life or someone else's life might be in danger.

If this is the case, we will tell a safeguarding contact - this will normally be the Director of Human Resources. It is their job to decide whether we need to pass the information on to anyone else. They might decide to tell social services or the police. If they make this decision, it is because we have to take reasonable steps to keep people safe - it's the law.

If we need to tell a safeguarding contact about your complaint, we will tell you that this is happening and why this decision was made.

Will you tell my parents or guardians?

16 or over

In Scotland, the age of Legal Capacity is 16 years old. This means that if you are 16 or over, in the eyes of the law, you can make your own decisions. We will only contact your parents or guardians if we have your permission.

15 or under

If you are 15 or under, and if your complaint is about something serious, we might need to contact your parents or guardians. We will ask you for your views on this.

If you don't want us to contact your parents or guardians, we might carry out a Best Interests Assessment. This means that we will think about whether it is in your best interest for your adults to be involved.

To make this decision, we will think about:

- 1) Your age and stage
- 2) How serious or complicated the complaint is
- 3) Whether it is normal for someone of your age and stage to deal with a complaint like this without adult support
- 4) Whether there is another responsible adult who can support you
- 5) What you want to happen

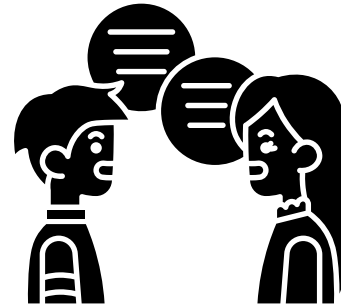
We will respect your wishes as far as possible. If we are planning to contact your parents, guardians or another responsible adult, we will let you know and we will ask how you would like us to do this.

What happens if I complain about a staff member?



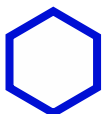
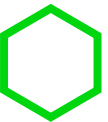
This depends on what you would like to happen. If you think a member of staff has done something wrong...

...you might want someone to speak to them about it...

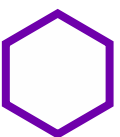


...you might want an apology...

...or you might want something else to happen instead.



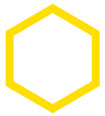
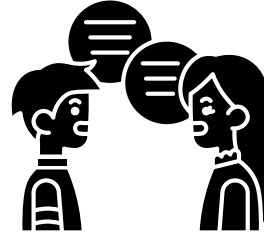
The Human Resources (HR) Department are responsible for staff. With your permission, we will share the complaint with HR, including details about what you would like to happen.



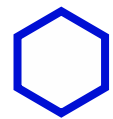
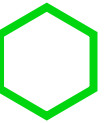
See the next page.



If you have asked us to speak to the member of staff, or if you would like us to investigate the complaint, we will usually need to share details of the complaint with the staff member. We will let you know what information we need to share and agree this with you before we do anything.



If you don't want them to know about the complaint, you can ask us to do something else, or you can ask us to do nothing but keep a record of your complaint. In these cases, we can talk about what else might help, and what other support you might need.



In rare cases, HR might need to do something about the complaint, even if you have asked them not to. This might happen if you have raised a complaint about harm or abuse, a crime, or a serious safeguarding issue.



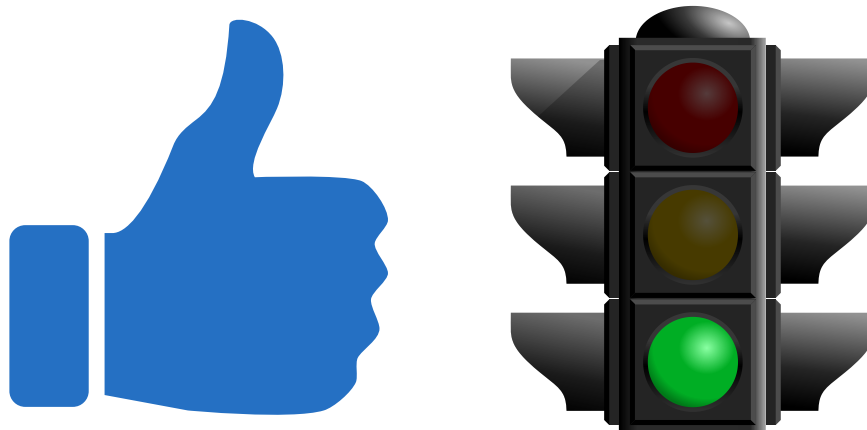
The outcome will be about whether you received the expected standard of service. This means whether or not you were treated fairly and with respect, and whether you were supported properly by the member of staff. We won't be able to tell you whether the staff member got in trouble - this information is private.



Can someone else complain for me?

With your knowledge and permission

Yes. A friend or a responsible adult can raise a complaint for you. We will still need to ask for your permission to handle the complaint and to talk to your friend or responsible adult about it. If you give us the green light, we can handle the complaint.



We will ask you:


- a) if you would like to tell us what you think about the problem
- b) if you would like to get updates
- c) if you would like the outcome to be sent to you
- d) if you would like your friend or responsible adult to make decisions about the complaint, or if you would like us to talk to you when decisions need to be made

See the next page.




Without your knowledge or permission

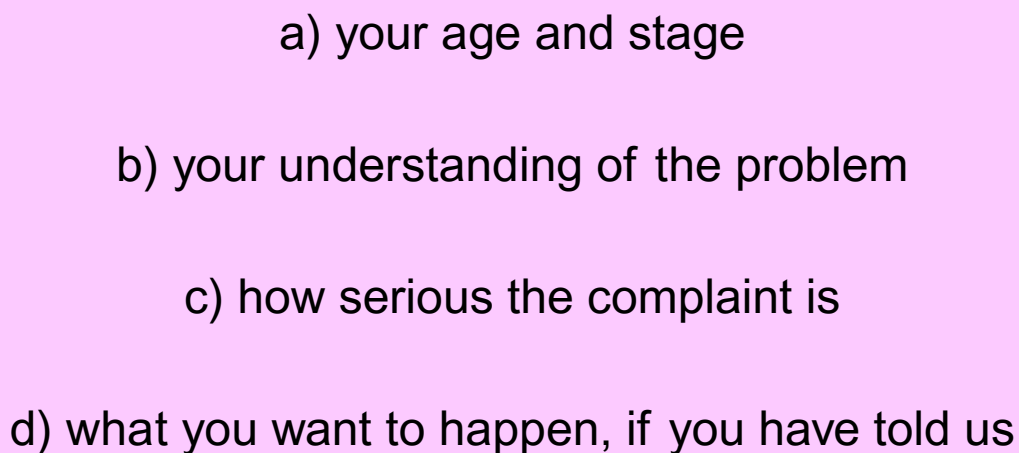
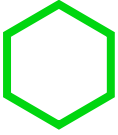
If someone raises a complaint on your behalf, we will explain to them that we need to ask for your permission for us to handle the complaint and talk to them about it.



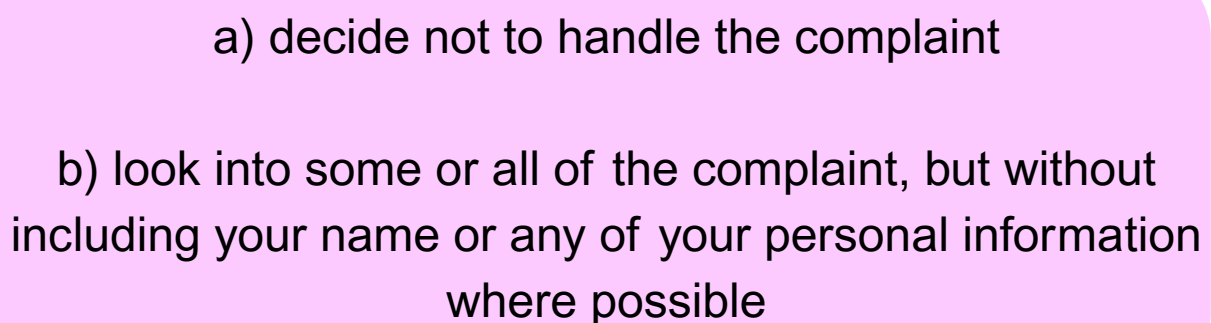
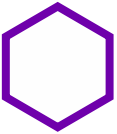
If the person who has raised the complaint doesn't want us to contact you, or if you don't want us to handle the complaint, we might carry out a Best Interests Assessment (under18s), meaning we will think about whether it is in your best interests for the complaint to be looked into.



To make this decision, we will think about:

- 
- a) your age and stage
 - b) your understanding of the problem
 - c) how serious the complaint is
 - d) what you want to happen, if you have told us
- 

As a result, we might:

- 
- a) decide not to handle the complaint
 - b) look into some or all of the complaint, but without including your name or any of your personal information where possible
- 



What are my rights in the complaint process?

All children (under 18) in Scotland have rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These rights are protected by law. You can find a summary of all of the rights here:

[UNCRC Summary](#)



In the complaints process, this means you have the right to:

- raise a complaint
- have your best interests prioritised
- not be treated differently because of things like your sex, ethnicity, family background, or anything else
- tell us what you think, how you feel, and what you would like to happen
- be taken seriously
- privacy for you and your family
- information about your rights

Parents and guardians have a right to give you advice. This needs to happen in a way that respects your rights and recognises that children become more capable of making their own decisions as they get older.

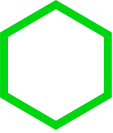
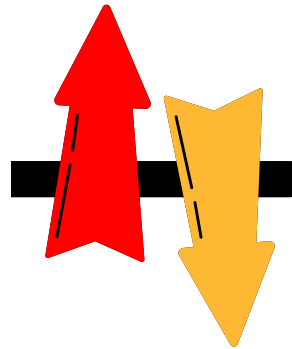
Where can I find more information about complaints?



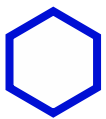
Our full Complaints Handling Procedure is published on the RCS website. You can find the documents here:



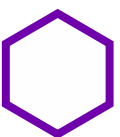
RCS Complaints



If you are a registered student, you can also find information about complaints in the Regulations, Codes of Procedure, and General Rules (section I) on the student portal:



Student Experience Policies
(Rules and Regulations)



I need support

Complaints

For any questions about the complaints procedure, or to arrange a meeting to talk in person about a complaint, you can contact complaint@rcs.ac.uk.

We understand that raising a complaint can sometimes feel scary. You might be feeling upset about the situation, and you might be worried about what is going to happen.

Emotional Support - Internal

If you're a registered student and you need any support for the way you're feeling, you can contact the counselling team on counselling@rcs.ac.uk. Or, have a look at the wellbeing resources on the student portal - [Wellbeing Resources](#).

Emotional Support - External

Phone Childline on 0800 11 11 for 24/7 private counselling. Or, have a look at their website and online 1-2-1 chat service - [Childline](#). These services are free.

