

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY 1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

Easton & Otley College is committed to providing a high quality of customer service by working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect with stakeholders.

This policy and supporting processes are in place to ensure that all compliments and complaints are dealt with in a respectful, professional and timely manner.

We consider all compliments and complaints to be positive in nature as they help us to identify areas we perform to a high standard in and also to develop and identify areas in which we can improve the service we offer.

All complaints will be dealt with sensitively and in line with our Safeguarding policy and practices.

2. COMPLIMENTS

A compliment is an expression of praise and satisfaction. We welcome all compliments to acknowledge what we do well and also to feedback to our staff and students on the high levels of service that they deliver.

All compliments will be feedback to the relevant person(s) or departments and shared with the Leadership Team. To make a compliment, please follow the Compliments Process map.

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3. COMPLAINTS

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction and is something that is personal to the complainant. We positively welcome all complaints and are grateful for the time taken to inform us of the ways in which we can improve.

In addressing issues that may have given rise to a complaint, complainants are strongly encouraged to resolve the matter initially through informal discussion with appropriate members of staff. Should the matter not be dealt with to the complainants satisfaction, the college operates a three stage complaint process. All complaints must follow this process and not move directly to Stage 2 or 3.

All complaints, regardless of the stage they are at, will be addressed within 7 working days of acknowledgement of the complaint. Under exceptional circumstances such as bank holidays, awaiting on evidence from an external provider etc this timeframe may need to be extended. Should this be the case, the complainant will be informed of the delay and given a further date of response.

To make a complaint please follow the Formal Complaint Stages 1-3 Process maps

4. COMPLAINT STAGES

Stage 1 Formal Complaint

A Responsible Officer is appointed at a Stage 1 Formal Complaint. The Responsible Officer will carry out a full investigation into the complaint and will provide feedback to the complainant within 7 working days of acknowledgement of the complaint.

The Responsible Officer will be the most senior manager within the department appropriate to the complaint.

If the complainant remains unhappy with the outcome they may appeal within 7 working days to the PA to the Principal to express their dissatisfaction and highlight the areas they remain unhappy with. The PA to Principal will progress this to Stage 2.

Publication	STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – approvals and format			
Website	Last review date	April 2017	Status	Live
Yes	Next review date	April 2018	Post-holder responsible:	Director of Marketing
	Last EqIA date		Approval required from:	SLT

Stage 2 Escalation

A Responsible Director is appointed at a Stage 2 Formal Complaint. The Responsible Director will review all evidence gained at Stage 1 and look further into the reasons why the complainant remains unhappy.

The Responsible Director will be the Director of the department most appropriate to the complaint.

If the complainant remains unhappy with the outcome they may appeal within 7 working days to the PA to the Principal to express their dissatisfaction and highlight the areas they remain unhappy with. The PA to Principal will progress this to Stage 3.

Stage 3 Appeal

The Principal and Chief Executive is the person appointed to carry out a Stage 3 Formal Complaint. The Principal and Chief Executive will carry out a full review of all information previously submitted at Stage 1 and Stage 2 and decide if there is sufficient further evidence to progress, or if the complaint has not been dealt with appropriately at stages 1 and 2 of the process.

In some cases, the Principal and Chief Executive may decide that the investigation has been carried out satisfactorily and no further evidence has been provided to justify a further investigation. As such, the Principal and Chief Executive will write directly to the complainant to inform them of this.

If the Principal and Chief Executive is not satisfied the investigation has been carried out appropriately, or that further evidence has been provided to substantiate the complaint, the Principal and Chief Executive reserves the right to extend the 7 working day deadline for a further 7 working days to allow the complainant to meet with the Principal and Chief Executive.

What to do if a Complainant is Dissatisfied with our Response

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive you may ask the Principal to reinvestigate. Do this by writing to her within 10 working days of receiving our response. After a further investigation you will receive a full reply within 10 working days.

Right of Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the response from the Principal then, depending upon the nature of your complaint you may have a further right of appeal to an external body. If this applies to you, the PA to the Principal will inform you and provide contact details for your appeal. This right of appeal could apply if:

- you are taking a further education course, then you could appeal to the Skills Funding Agency. Details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/complainfurthereducationapprenticeship>
- you are taking a higher education course validated by the University of East Anglia (UEA) and your complaint relates to an academic judgement or outcome. In this situation you may be entitled to appeal to the UEA and possibly afterwards to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (see the HE Academic Appeals Procedure);
- your complaint relates to our adherence to the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000, then you could appeal to the Office of the Information Commissioner.

Exceptions

Should the responsible member of staff of any complaint stages be absent from work for sufficient time that would impact upon the 7 working day response, the PA to the Principal will allocate the next most senior suitable person to investigate the complaint.

In the case of a Stage 3 Appeal, the next most senior Director will be responsible. In most cases this would be the Assistant or Vice Principal.

5. COMPLAINTS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

If the complaint is regarding a member of staff, the normal processes will remain in place however it may not be possible to share all aspects of the investigation with the complainant. This is due to employee rights should the investigation lead to a formal disciplinary hearing. The complainant will be informed that the complaint is being dealt with by the Human Resource team.

6. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

The college operates a zero tolerance of abuse towards staff and as such, should a complaint contain offensive behaviour or language not relevant to the complaint we reserve the right to not review the matter until such a time as the complaint can be delivered in an acceptable and professional manner.

7. OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR

Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their Stage Three Appeal, or whose Appeal or Complaint was rejected without a hearing, may complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

Complainant Name	
Address	
Email	
Telephone	
Course details	
Campus	

COMPLAINT DETAILS

Please complete the below box with as much detail about the complaint as possible to assist the Investigating Officer

Date of alleged event				
Details of complaint				
Are there witnesses?	Yes		No	

If yes, investigating officer to arrange to meet the witnesses and complete a witness statement

Investigating Officer to:

- Explain the role of the investigating officer
- Explain the need for confidentiality
- Explain that anonymity cannot be guaranteed
- Explain that the statement given may be provided as evidence
- Explain next steps

WITNESS STATEMENT

All individuals present in the session must sign below to confirm the above as an accurate record of the discussions. If there is more than one witness please complete individual forms

Witness Name	
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

Please describe in detail exactly what you witnessed:

I, _____ (PRINT NAME), confirm that the following statement is a clear and accurate account of what I witnessed in relation to the complaint

Signed _____ Dated _____

For office use only

COMPLAINT RECEIVED BY

Discussion		Letter		Telephone		Email	
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AREA OF COMPLAINT

Course	Campus Services	Staff	Catering	Sport & Leisure	Admin/ Finance	Other

ALLOCATION

Name of investigating officer	
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COMPLAINT TIMELINE

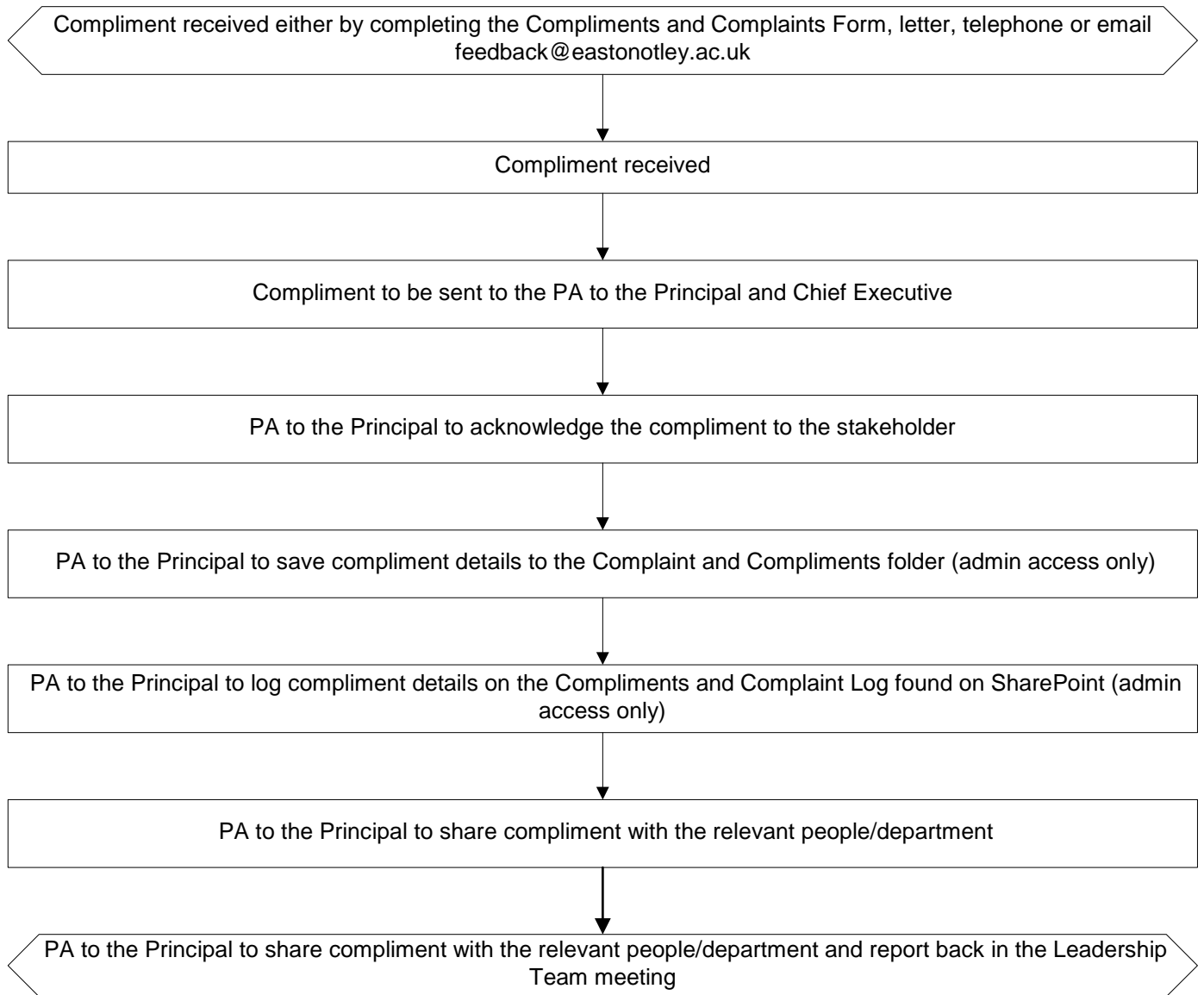
Date complaint received	
7 working day date	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

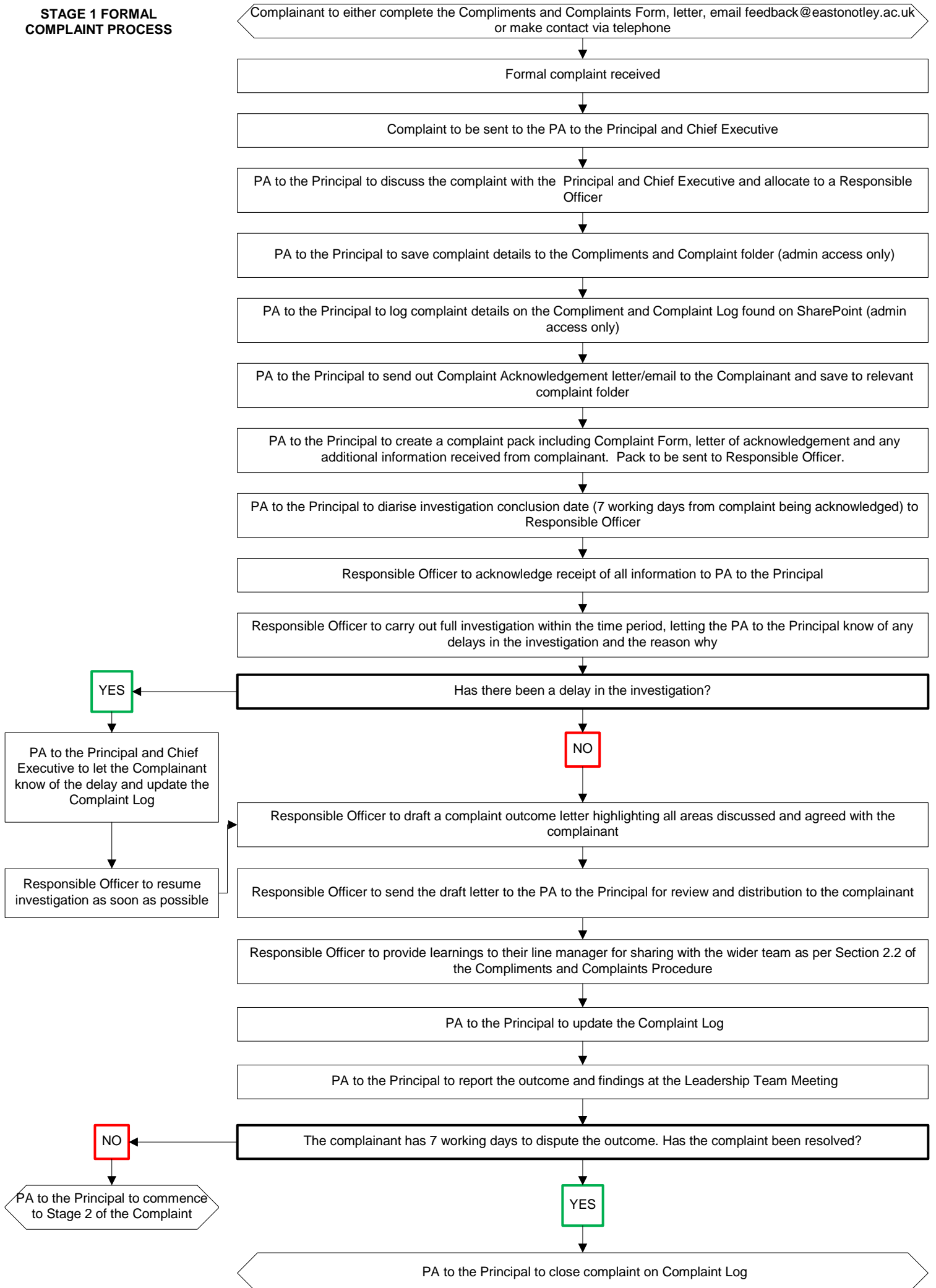
Letter of acknowledgement sent by PA to the Principal & Chief Executive	
Date recorded for reply in Investigating Officer's calendar by PA to the Principal & Chief Executive	
Copy of complaint sent to HR Director if the complaint is against a member of staff	

NEXT STEPS

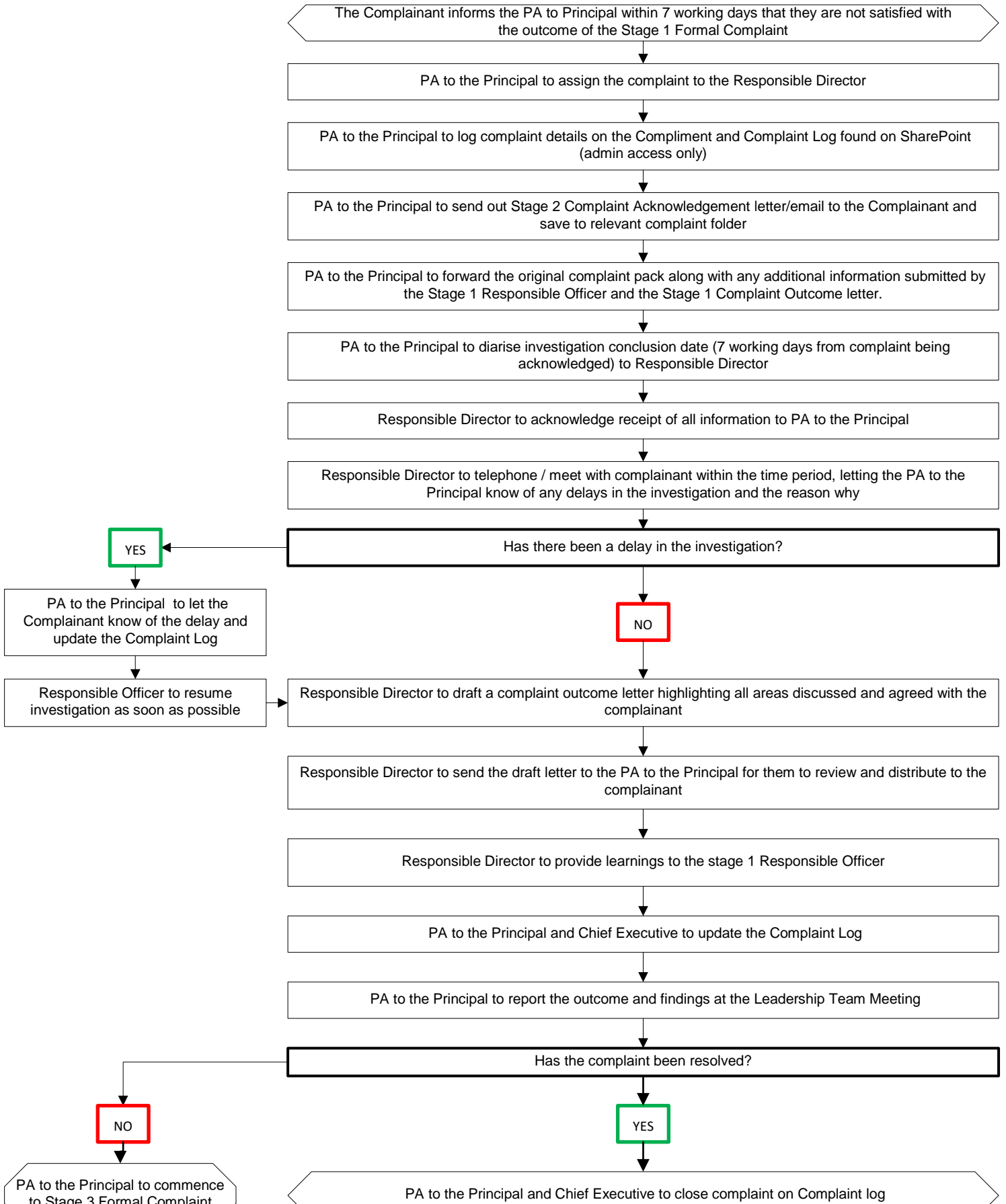
PA to the Principal & Chief Executive to send complaint close down letter to complainant	
PA to the Principal & Chief Executive to update the Complaints Log on SharePoint	
PA to the Principal & Chief Executive to feedback complaint to the Leadership Team	



STAGE 1 FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS



STAGE 2 ESCALATION
PROCESS



STAGE 3 APPEAL
PROCESS

