

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Creative is committed to dealing effectively with complaints. We aim to clarify any issues as swiftly as possible and put right any mistakes we have made. We aim to learn from our mistakes and use the experience to improve.

Our definition of a complaint is:

‘An expression of dissatisfaction in relation to our company or a member of its staff’

This complaints policy and procedure supports our commitment and is a way of ensuring that anyone with an interest in the company can raise a concern, with confidence that it will be heard and, if well-founded, addressed in an appropriate way.

If you have a complaint

If you are not happy with *anything* at Creative, please approach us to discuss the issue. Most concerns can be settled quickly just by speaking to the relevant person, without the need to use a formal procedure. Once you have made your complaint, please give us a chance to respond. However, if you are not happy with our response then you may use the procedure below.

What we expect from you

We understand that all complaints have a right to be heard, understood and respected. We expect you to be polite and courteous. We will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour. We will not tolerate unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence or vexatious complaining.

Our approach to answering your concern or complaint

1. We will consider all your concerns and complaints in an open and fair way
2. We will respect your rights and feelings of those involved and make every effort to protect confidential information
3. Timescales for dealing with your concerns or complaints may need to be extended following discussion with you
4. We may ask for external advice
5. Some types of concern or complaint may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way, in which case we will explain why this is so, and will tell you what steps will be taken
6. Records will be kept for seven years and then the decision will be made if they need to be kept longer
7. Complaints that are made anonymously will be recorded but investigation will be at the discretion of the directors, depending on the nature of the complaint
8. Where complaints are considered to have been made to cause harm or offence to individuals or Creative, the directors will ensure that records are kept of the investigations that are made and what actions are taken, including the reasons for ‘no action’

Answering your concern or complaint

There are up to three stages: A, B and C

Most complaints can be resolved at Stages A and B. You can bring a relative or companion to support you at any time during the process, but you will be expected to speak for yourself.

As far as possible, your concern or complaint will be dealt with on a confidential basis. However, there could be occasions when the person dealing with your concern or complaint will need to consider if anyone else in Creative needs to know, so it is addressed appropriately.

If you are a student under 16 years of age and wish to raise a concern or complaint, we will ask for your permission before we involve your parents/carers.

Stage A

If you have a concern, you can often resolve it by talking to your son/daughter's teacher/tutor. If you need to speak to the tutors, please make sure that you book an appointment with them. To do this, please telephone 01352 755141. You should raise the concern as soon as you can. Normally we would expect you to raise the issue within **10 school days** of any incident. The longer you leave it, the harder it might be for those involved to deal with it effectively.

If you are a student, you can raise your concerns with the tutor involved or another tutor who you feel you could talk to. This will not stop you raising a complaint at a later date, if you feel that the issue has not been dealt with properly.

We will try to let you know what we have done or are doing about your concern within 10 working days, but if this is not possible, we will talk to you and agree a revised timescale with you.

The director overseeing your complaint will keep you informed of the progress being made. This person will also keep a log of the concern for future reference.

Stage B

In most cases, we would expect your concern to be resolved informally. If you feel that your initial concern has not been dealt with appropriately you should put your complaint in writing to a director - Mr Darren Martin or Mrs Alison Matthias.

We would expect you to aim to do this **within five working days of receiving a response to your concern, as it is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as soon as possible**. We have a form that you may find useful. If you are a student, we will explain the form to you, help you complete it and give you a copy.

If you have a complaint about a director, you should put your complaint in writing to the other director to ask for your complaint to be investigated.

One of the directors will invite you to discuss your complaint at a meeting. Timescales for dealing with your complaint will be agreed with you. We will aim to have a meeting with you and to explain what will happen within **10 working days** of receiving your letter. One of the directors will complete

the investigation and will let you know the outcome in writing **within 10 working days** of completion.

Stage C

It is rare that a complaint will progress any further. However, if you still feel that your complaint has not been dealt with fairly, you should write to Creative stating this and ask for your complaint to be heard externally by a panel appointed by the directors of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom is independent of the management and running of Creative. You should set out your reasons for asking them to consider your complaint. You do not have to write down the details of your complaint again.

If you prefer, instead of sending a letter, you can telephone Creative directly (01352 755141) to write down what is discussed and what, in your own words, would resolve the problem. We would normally expect you to do this **within five working days** of receiving the initial response from Creative. You will be asked to read the notes or will have the notes read back to you and then be asked to sign them as a true record of what was said. We will let you know who will be dealing with the complaint and will send a letter to confirm this. You will normally hear back within **15 working days** of receiving your letter.

The letter will also tell you when all the evidence and documentation to be considered must be received. Everyone involved will see the evidence and documentation before the meeting, while ensuring that rights to privacy of information are protected. The letter will also record what we have agreed with you about when and where the meeting will take place and what will happen. You will be able to attend this meeting along with a friend or representative if you wish. The timescale may need to be changed, to allow for the availability of people, the gathering of evidence or seeking advice. In this case, the person dealing with the complaint will agree a new meeting date with you.

Normally, to deal with the complaint as quickly as possible, the complaints committee will not reschedule the meeting more than once. If you ask to reschedule the meeting more than once, the committee may deem it reasonable to make a decision on the complaint in your absence to avoid delays.

We will write to you **within 10 working days** of the meeting to explain the findings and recommendations of the complaints committee's consideration.

The correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential. These records will be kept for a minimum of **seven** years.

Special circumstances

Where a complaint is made about any of the following, the complaints procedure will be applied differently.

One of the directors

The other director will be informed and will investigate it or delegate it to an external body. Stage B onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

In all cases, Creative will ensure that complaints are dealt with in an unbiased, open and fair way.

Our commitment to you

We will take your concerns and complaints seriously and, where we have made mistakes, will try to learn from them.

We will keep written records of all complaints and make note as to whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.

All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential.

If you need help to make your concerns known, we will try and assist you. If you are a young person and need extra help, the Welsh Government has established MEIC which is the national advocacy and advice helpline for children and young people. Advice and support can also be accessed from the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

MEIC - Telephone 08088023456 or text 84001.

This service is operated 24 hours a day

Children's Commissioner for Wales - Telephone 08088011000 (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm)

Text 80800 (start your message with COM)

Email advice@childcomwales.org.uk