

GRIEVANCE POLICY 2023/2024

1. Introduction

Doorstep Arts aims to ensure positive relationships between all staff/volunteers and encourages an environment whereby any problems or issues can be addressed and resolved informally and quickly. Should this not be possible, procedures exist to help resolve grievances as quickly as possible with consistency and fairness.

Doorstep Arts will ensure that staff/volunteers are made aware of the most recent version of this policy and procedure, and any subsequent amendments.

2. Policy Statement

It is important that all staff/volunteers are treated as individuals, with needs and expectations, and these are balanced together with the needs and objectives of the company, and in line with the law. It is expected that problems and concerns are dealt with promptly, openly and fairly.

This Grievance Policy and Procedure provides the framework for dealing promptly and fairly with a problem or concern. When dealing with a formal grievance, Advisory Board members must endeavour to understand the reason for the grievance, with Board members and/or staff/volunteer having a shared responsibility in identifying solutions to the problem or concern and in line with Doorstep Art's Memorandum and Articles.

Following appropriate consideration and the application of a fair process, a grievance should usually be concluded within 28 days. Any solutions, recommendations or actions should be implemented as soon as is practicable.

3. Requirements

- All staff/volunteers are requested to act within the boundaries of Doorstep Arts Policies and Procedures.
- Staff, volunteers and Board members should carry out their role in a manner which will assist in preventing the likelihood of a grievance arising.
- Complaints must be raised as soon as possible, but certainly within 28 calendar days of the incident occurring.
- Doorstep Arts will ensure that all documentation will be treated as strictly confidential and that all records will be held securely. Access to information will be limited to appropriate people.
- If it is established that staff/volunteers have raised a false, spurious or vexatious grievance then action may be taken against the complainant.

4. Responsibilities

It is requested that all staff members/volunteers should:

- Comply with the arrangements set out in this policy and procedure
- Aim to resolve all personal grievances informally with the Directors or with the individual to whom the grievance relates. This allows for problems to be resolved quickly between those concerned.
- Ensure that any concern is raised early so that the matter does not become more serious. For

this reason, if the informal approach does not bring resolution, or is not considered appropriate, the grievance should be raised in writing as soon as possible, (as detailed in the procedure) and within 28 calendar days from the matter arising. Any delay in raising the grievance may affect the extent to which the matter can be investigated and resolved satisfactorily.

- Respect confidentiality and to respect any potential damage to the company and its reputation.

The Directors should:

- ensure that problems and concerns that are raised informally by staff members/volunteers are addressed promptly and resolved where possible
- seek to acknowledge the cause of the concern and where relevant to take appropriate action to prevent the matter arising again
- ensure that any formal grievance raised is dealt with promptly, fairly and frankly, in accordance with this policy and procedure.

Grievance Procedure

1. Informal Approach

It is vital that any concerns are resolved as soon as possible and once a grievance has been raised in writing the formal procedure should be the way of addressing the matter. Before commencing the formal procedure, the Directors may seek clarification from the staff member or volunteer that they want the matter addressed through the formal process.

If at this stage the staff member/volunteer would prefer that the matter be dealt with through informal discussion, mediation or a facilitated meeting then this will be confirmed in writing.

2. Formal Procedure

If the staff member/volunteer wants to follow the formal process, or the Directors are unable to address the matter informally, then the steps below should be followed:

2.1 Registering the grievance

- Any staff member/volunteer who wishes to raise a grievance should submit the matter in writing to the Directors or Co-Parents.
- Staff members/volunteers are actively encouraged to set out the details of the grievance, attaching any relevant documentation. When the staff member/volunteer is aware of the outcome they require or can identify anything that may help resolve their concern this should be included within the written grievance.
- The Directors should acknowledge receipt of the grievance and inform a Panel consisting of at least one Director and at least one other Advisory Board Member so that they can provide advice and guidance to both parties, as appropriate, to help resolve the matter.
- If the grievance relates to another staff member/volunteer the panel will need to inform them of the basis of the grievance. In the case of the grievance relating to a Board member, the panel will need to decide whether a brief period of suspension is required. In this situation the Panel will need to inform the other Directors and Board members and they may need to make this decision at a meeting of the Advisory Board.

2.2 Convening a resolution meeting

- The purpose of this meeting is to enable the panel to fully understand the grievance and consider how it can be resolved.
- Where practicable, the invitation to the meeting should be made within 14 calendar days of receiving the grievance.
- The invitation to the meeting should give the staff member/volunteer 14 calendar days' notice and inform the staff member/volunteer involved of the choice to attend the meeting in person or enter a written submission.
- If either of the staff member/volunteer involved wish to attend in person, but however cannot attend due to circumstances outside their control and unforeseeable at the time the meeting was arranged, the staff and volunteers(s) can suggest an alternative time and date, so long as it is reasonable and it is not more than 14 calendar days after the original date.
- The chair of the panel (to be decided by the Advisory Board) will seek to take all reasonable steps to arrange a suitable date within 14 calendar days of the original meeting date.

2.3 Attendance at the meeting

Attendance at the meeting will consist of:

- The Panel (consisting of at least 1 Director and at least 1 more Board member)
- The staff member/volunteer involved (if they wish they can bring one more person with them)
- A further Board Member/the administrator to act as note taker. A note taker may not be required to attend but full and meaningful notes will be taken. These will normally be issued to the staff member/volunteer within 7 working days. All notes will be kept on file.

2.4 Conduct of the meeting

At the meeting:

- the staff member/volunteer, if attending, will be asked to explain their grievance and how they think, within reason, it might be resolved
- the Panel may ask questions to clarify matters
- the Panel may adjourn the meeting for a short time to consider the grievance and reach a conclusion, unless further investigation is required
- All attending the meeting would be requested to abide by Doorstep Arts' Code of Conduct.

2.5 Outcome

Following any necessary adjournments, the meeting will be re-convened for the panel to outline their conclusion(s).

At conclusion the Panel:

- Are required to outline their findings and where applicable, confirming the facts gathered from witnesses and other sources. The staff member/volunteer should be given the opportunity to respond to any of these points.
- Will then state their decision and the reasons for it along with any proposed solutions, recommendations or actions.
- Ensure that notes will be taken as outlined under 2.3
- The Panel is required to confirm their decision and the reasons for it in writing. Wherever possible, this should be done at the end of the meeting following the necessary adjournment.
- If it is not possible to confirm the decision in writing on the day, then it should be done as soon as possible. The staff member/volunteer will have 14 calendar days to appeal, from the date of the letter. In cases where the letter is posted and there is a delay in receipt of the letter, the appeal period may be reasonably extended by mutual agreement.

3. Appeals

- Appeals must be submitted in writing, within 14 calendar days of the date of the resolution meeting, to the person specified by the Chair of the grievance meeting.
- The appeal must clearly state why the staff member/volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome at the grievance meeting and what outcome they are seeking. The person receiving the appeal will need to acknowledge receipt.
- The appeal meeting will be arranged where practical within a maximum of 14 calendar days of receiving the request for an appeal. The same arrangements outlined for the resolution meeting apply regarding the right for the staff member/volunteer to suggest a reasonable alternative date.

3.1 Appeal Meetings

- The Chair will review the information already available and make further enquiries as appropriate. If new information has come to light, further investigation may be necessary, however this should not delay the appeal meeting
- At the appeal meeting the staff member/volunteer will be asked to explain the reason why they have appealed and the outcome they require or whether they can identify anything that may help resolve their concern.
- The same arrangements for the resolution meeting will apply.
- The person chairing the appeal will confirm their decision as outlined in paragraph 2.5
- Attendance will be limited to the Chair, staff and volunteers, and another board member/administrator to act as note taker. A note taker may not be required to attend but full and meaningful notes will be taken. These will normally be issued to the staff member/volunteer within 7 working days. All notes will be kept on file.

4. Full Advisory Board Meeting Resolution

In the event that the Resolution and/or Appeal Meetings have not resolved the grievance, the matter will then be referred to the next possible full Advisory Board Meeting.

- The person chairing the meeting will outline the grievance case to date and why it has been brought to the meeting.
- The relevant staff member/volunteer involved will be allowed to address the meeting (or enter a written submission)
- Questions (at the discretion of the meeting's Chair) may be asked to the involved parties.
- Resolutions will be sought from the meeting floor.
- Any resolutions will be put to a vote of the meeting. A simple majority vote will decide the resolution.
- The decision of the meeting shall be final and communicated in writing to all parties.

If any party is not satisfied with the result from the full Advisory Board Meeting, they are able to complain directly to the Charity Commission, who may seek to resolve the situation, or accept the will of the full Advisory Board Meeting.

5. Staff member/volunteer who have left Doorstep Arts

If a grievance is raised by a staff member/volunteer who has left Doorstep Arts within the last 30 days or, the grievance procedure will normally be modified and completed in writing (without Resolution or Appeal Meetings).

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