



Name of policy	Reviewed by	Signed	Date reviewed	Date for next review
Complaints	Jade Sloan		5/5/26	May 2027

Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd Complaints Policy

Who can make a complaint?

Any parent/carer, student or professional, may make a complaint to Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

The difference between a concern and a complaint.

A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns, and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Please refer all complaints, in the first instance, to Company Director Jade Sloan

Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd

Stanhope House

113-117 Stanhope Road South

Darlington

DL3 7SF

Tel 07739 013819 Email blackbirdcreativearts@gmail.com

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant if they have appropriate consent to do so.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this policy document. If you require help in completing the form please ask a third party organisation like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints unless they contain allegations relating to safeguarding or child protection, in which case they will always be investigated in line with our Safeguarding Policy. However, the Company Director will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this period if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of facilities or services by Blackbird Creative Arts. Complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, are listed below.

Exceptions - Who to contact

Transition for SEND students

Transition proposals should be raised with the school, academy and/or local authority.

Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation

Complaints about child protection matters are overseen under our safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has

local responsibility for safeguarding.

Whistleblowing

The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education, who do not want to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at:

www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Staff conduct

Complaints about staff will be dealt with under Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd internal disciplinary procedures, however any complaint that meets the threshold of a safeguarding allegation or a "Low-Level Concern" will be immediately routed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and handled strictly under the Safeguarding Policy, rather than the standard complaints timeline.

Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member because of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd wants to resolve the complaint. If deemed appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been managed differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

If a formal complaint is raised regarding a specific student's provision, welfare, or safety, Blackbird Creative Arts will inform the referring school and share the outcome of the investigation with them.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Complaints Procedure

The stages for making a complaint to Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd

Written records must be made by Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd at each stage of the procedure.

Stage 1

In the first instance, the Company Director must establish the seriousness of the complaint. An informal approach will be adopted when appropriate. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, or involve safeguarding, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Stage 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the member of the public, professional or parent/carer should be advised that a formal complaint may be made, and the following procedure should be explained to them.

a) A formal complaint can be made either verbally or in writing. If in writing the attached form should be used. If verbally, a member of the Management Team should take a statement.

b) Formal complaints must be made to the Company Director (unless they are about

the Head of Teaching and Learning), via the address given for the Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone.

c) The Company Director will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 10 working school days. Within this response, the Company Director will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like. The Company Director will consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

During the investigation, the Company Director will:

a) if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish

b) keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Company Director will provide a formal

written response within 28 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the Company Director is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation

of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd will take to resolve the complaint.

The Company Director will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint

should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2

If the complaint is about the director:

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent HR company. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Stage 2

a) If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision, then the independent HR company will be requested to re-examine the complaint and may wish to conduct further interviews, examine files / notes. They will respond in writing. Their decision will be final except in the case of safeguarding concerns, in which case, the matter may be referred to external agencies such as the LADO or police.

Stage 3: Appeals Panel or Independent Review, if a parent/carer is unhappy with the Director's Stage 2 decision, the complaint will be reviewed by an independent third party or the external HR company to ensure fairness.

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Duty Manager who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at

Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd about it.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd or the independent HR company in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media
- Adhere to GDPR rules: <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by providing

comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:

- sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
- interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
- consideration of records and other relevant information
- analysing information
- consulting with the complainant as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond

- prepare a comprehensive report that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The Company Director will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Duty Manager (member of administration team for Blackbird Creative Arts Ltd or HR company if employed to investigate as an independent body)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
 - sharing third party information
 - additional support. Complainants may need this when making a complaint and may include language interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person, an appropriate representative or advocate
- keep written records.

If you require clarification of any of the wording in this policy, please contact:

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