

Member Complaint Policy



1. Aims

Emil Dale Part Time (EDSA)***, pride ourselves on our openness and approachability. EDSA welcomes the expression of opinions and suggestions, and, in particular, recognises the right of members, parents/legal guardians and staff to express a concern or make a formal complaint if necessary.

****In this policy, the abbreviation of EDSA will be used.*

For the purpose of this policy, the term “member” is used to mean anyone enrolled at EDSA. A parent, guardian or caregiver may speak on behalf of the member if they deem necessary.

EDSA recognise that, whilst we are committed to providing a high-quality, fair training experience for all, unexpected problems may arise. All staff at ESDA have a responsibility to receive complaints, to take them seriously, to deal with them promptly, or to pass them on to the EDSA Manager, in accordance with the procedure below.

EDSA’s aim is to ensure that all complaints are managed efficiently, effectively, and sensitively. All complaints will be handled at the appropriate level so that they may be resolved as soon as possible. Members should never feel that raising an issue will negatively impact their standing at EDSA, or that their concern(s) will be taken lightly. Whilst every complaint will be taken seriously, EDSA recognises the difference between a difficulty that can be resolved informally, and a formal complaint that requires an investigation.

EDSA is committed to ensuring that decisions are made consistently, at the appropriate level, with appropriate action being taken on identified issues, and information gathered will be used to improve the service for all members.

EDSA aims to operate a fair and cohesive complaints procedure, ensuring members will not suffer any detriment during, or after, raising a complaint.

This policy is designed to mitigate complaints, and to, where possible, handle situations at an internal level. EDSA will handle complaints in a fair and confidential manner, provided it is not a safeguarding matter, and expects complainants to do the same. This applies to social media including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter and Snapchat.

2. Policy & Procedure Summary

Stage One Informal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handled informally and internally between the member and the EDSA Manager
Stage Two Formal complaint – initial stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaint made in writing• Complaint acknowledged by the EDSA Manager within 7 working days of it being received• Complaint passed on to the Emil Dale Academy Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager by EDSA Manager• Investigator appointed
Stage Three Internal panel review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal panel review• Formal written response
Stage Four Advanced complaints stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emil Dale Academy Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager assembles Complaints Panel• Panel hearing with Complaints Panel and Complainant• Final written ruling from the panel

3. Scope

This policy applies to all members enrolled at EDSA.

All members will be treated equally, regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, or religion. EDSA is committed to receiving all complaints fairly, without prejudice, with the intent to deal with them in a constructive, transparent way.

EDSA cannot regulate or be held accountable for views shared on social media or communicated by members or staff when they are done so on personal accounts not related to EDSA. This includes any messages, statements or communications in groups not specifically set up and monitored by EDSA.

EDSA cannot reasonably regulate or discipline members where situations occur outside of EDSA hours or during EDSA holidays where the only link to EDSA is the fact that the people involved are EDSA members/stakeholders.

Parents and/or legal guardians of an EDSA member will be contacted and continuously involved in the complaints process if the complainant is their respective member.

4. Definitions

- A) A **concern** is defined as an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought". EDSA will resolve concerns through internal communication where possible.
- B) A **complaint** is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or lack thereof". Complaints will be handled using the following procedure.

5. Accountability

EDSA members and/or their parents/guardians have a responsibility to raise concerns in the first instance, and at the earliest opportunity.

All EDSA staff have a responsibility to receive complaints, take them seriously and deal with them promptly and without prejudice.

The EDSA Manager and the Emil Dale Academy Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager have a responsibility to track, record and report the outcome of all EDSA formal complaints. The record will be confidential but will include the date, person(s) concerned and how it was resolved.

The Emil Dale Academy Principal and Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager have a responsibility to assist with resolving a complaint, contributing to the investigation when it is considered appropriate.

The Emil Dale Academy Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager will be responsible for resolving complaints at the appeal stage.

6. Policy & Procedure

Complaints can be made in person, on the telephone or in writing – either in letter or email – and will be taken seriously by all staff members and handled with respect.

If a complaint is found to be malicious, the complainant may be subject to disciplinary procedure. Unfounded complaints, or those without substance, will be dismissed. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated.

EDA operates a four-stage process for complaints:

Stage One

Complaints, by their nature, will vary in severity, and it is EDSA's aim to try to resolve any complaint informally in the first instance. Concerns about any aspect of a member's training or wellbeing can be raised to the relevant Animation Team member or the EDSA Manager. If the situation cannot be addressed on the spot, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the complaint.

We ask that complaints are made at the earliest opportunity, and not later than within 10 days of the incident. Complaints made beyond this time will not be rejected but may prove more difficult to resolve satisfactorily.

EDSA aims to resolve concerns swiftly and locally, before a student escalates them into a formal complaint. This might include, for example, face to face discussions with the member and their parent/guardian, or asking for an appropriate member of staff, or mediator or conciliator, to deal with the matter. Effective ways of dealing with the complaint at this stage may include:

- Giving more information or a more detailed explanation
- Suggesting solutions
- Being empathetic and understanding when there is no apparent solution
- Giving an apology where it seems appropriate to do so
- Introducing member and staff conciliators

Where it is clear early resolution is not appropriate or possible, and that a concern will need to proceed immediately to the formal stage.

Stage Two

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should make a formal complaint in writing, or seek support from a member of staff to do so. An email detailing their situation and the desired remedy should be sent to part-time@emildale.co.uk FAO the EDSA Manager - Private. This should be sent within 10 working days of the concern arising. Upon receipt of the email, the EDSA Manager will respond within 7 days.

The EDSA Manager will then refer the complaint to Emil Dale Academy's Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager ("The Investigator"). In the event that a complaint is made against the Business, Compliance & Strategy Manager, the Emil Dale Academy Principal will be appointed to deal with the issue.

The Investigator is responsible for informing the member and their parent/guardian of the approach they will take and the outcome. The Investigator may:

- Find a suitable solution to resolve the complaint
- Choose to convene with other members of staff to resolve the issue
- Dismiss the complaint, giving reasons, and issue a Completion of Procedures letter
- Suggest a timeframe for further investigations.

Where appropriate, the Investigator may suggest mediation. If all parties agree, the investigation will be suspended. At the end of mediation, either the complaint will be resolved or the investigation will resume.

Once the Investigator has collected and assessed information from all key people involved, they will use the balance of probabilities, and their judgement on what is reasonable to write a report supporting one of the four following recommendations:

1. The complaint is fully upheld and remedy is proposed;
2. The complaint is partially upheld and a remedy is proposed for the successful part;
3. The complaint is not upheld;
4. The case is so complex that the findings would benefit from discussion through an internal review, consisting of three impartial nominees.

EDSA aims to complete stage two within 30 working days of receiving the complaint.

Stage Three

Where a complainant is not satisfied with the response at stage two, or when recommended by the Investigator, the complaint may progress to stage three, an internal panel review.

The Principal will nominate three impartial nominees to review the details of the complaint. They will all be internal Emil Dale Academy staff members with no prior knowledge or experience of the case. They will conduct a review similar to that of the Investigator and consider the Investigator's findings also. They will seek the same recommended outcomes as the Investigator; however in the event that the Internal Review is not enough, they may recommend progressing the complaint to the Advanced Complaints Stage.

Complaints should be dealt with as quickly as possible. Receipt of formal complaints will be acknowledged. All formal complaints will receive a written response stipulating the outcome and the right of appeal, where appropriate.

Stage Four

If the complaint cannot be resolved at stage three, or the complainant is not satisfied with the response at stage three, a Complaints Panel will be organised by the Emil Dale Academy Principal.

The Complaints Panel will consist of three members of academic staff:

- Chair: An Associate from outside EDSA but has standing at Emil Dale Academy

- 2 members of Emil Dale Academy or EDSA staff who are unconnected to the case

At the panel hearing, the complainant and their parent/guardian must attend, no other companions are permitted to attend.

As the procedure is not an adversarial one, legal representation will not be required by any of the parties involved and will not be permitted.

The complainant and their parent/guardian will receive formal notification at least 14 calendar days prior to the hearing, which will include the names of all panel members. If they believe there is a conflict of interest with any panel members, they must inform EDSA at the earliest opportunity so that an alternative may be found, but this may delay the date of the hearing.

Where possible, the panel will resolve the problem at the hearing. Where further investigation is required, the panel will reach a decision and make its recommendations known within 14 working days.

The panel can reach one of the following decisions:

1. Uphold the complaint, and decide resolution
2. Partially uphold the complaint, and decide resolution
3. Reject the complaint

Clear and concise reasoning will be given for any decision made. The written decision will be held with the Complaints Log by the Emil Dale Academy Principal. All rulings by the Panel are final. Where repeated attempts are made to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.

If the complainant feels that EDSA and the Complaints Panel board acted 'unreasonably' in the handling of the complaint, they can write directly to the Emil Dale Academy Principal for a further review. However, if this is dismissed, there are no further appeals procedures to follow, and the case will be closed.

7. Additional Notes

Outside of Term Time

During EDSA holidays, it will not be possible to acknowledge and follow up complaints at the same timescale. The period of availability will depend on the staff's availability. In any event, EDSA aims to resolve the complaint within 60 days.

Safeguarding

Wherever a complaint indicates that a member's well-being or safety is at risk, EDSA is under a duty to report this immediately to the local authority. Any action taken will be in accordance with the EDSA's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, found on the website.

Where a member is over 18, the student themselves will be encouraged to seek avenues for support under the support and guidance of EDSA.

Social Media

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, EDSA requests the complainants not discuss complaints publicly via social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and/or Snapchat.

Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

Record Keeping and Reporting

All formal complaints and their outcomes will be recorded by EDSA. All records relating to complaints should be retained for a maximum of three years.

If a member and/or staff member has had a complaint made against them and has left and/or deferred their position at EDSA, any complaints against this person will still be kept on file. If this person is set to return to EDSA within three years since the complaint was first made, the procedure will be picked up and continued from where it was halted.

Version Number	Date of Issue	Review Date	Author	Changes made/detail
1	21 st November 22	July 23	Eden Tinsey	First issue