

Complaints Policy

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Record of changes

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Policy Statement

The Outdoors Group Ltd takes the receiving of complaints as a very serious issue, we value our clients and aim to provide a quality service. The Outdoors Group Ltd will endeavour to resolve issues quickly and to the satisfaction of the clients within the legal framework of the law and the boundaries of any relevant National Governing Bodies for the industry. At no point does our complaints procedure aim to obstruct or interfere with your statutory rights under the law.

Definitions

Definition of a Complaint

"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by The Outdoors Group Ltd or its staff, whether the action was taken, or the service provided by The Outdoors Group Ltd itself or a person or body acting on behalf of The Outdoors Group Ltd".

Complaints will generally include allegations about:

- Failure to provide a service at the level or standard laid down by The Outdoors Group Ltd policy.
- Unhelpful or insensitive attitude of an employee of The Outdoors Group Ltd or other company representing The Outdoors Group Ltd.
- Neglect or delay in answering a query or responding to a request for service.
- Failure to follow The Outdoors Group Ltd's agreed policies and/or procedures.
- Failure to take account of relevant matters in coming to a decision.
- Malice, bias, or unfair discrimination.

The following types of complaint are excluded from the procedure:

- Complaints which amount to a disagreement with a decision of The Outdoors Group Ltd policy, rather than the way in which the decision has been arrived at or carried out.
- A course or development control matter where a person disagrees with course content or presentation unless the complaint relates to the way in which the matter was dealt with.
- Any decision of The Outdoors Group Ltd under its legal powers, unless the complaint relates to the way in which the matter was dealt with.
- A matter which is, or could reasonably be expected to be, the subject of court or tribunal proceedings.

The complaints system does not cover:

- Requests for a service.
- An explanation of The Outdoors Group Ltd policy.
- Matters for which there is a right of appeal or legal remedy.
- Allegations of conduct that is expressly covered by other policy and procedure (i.e., matters arising under a Safeguarding concern).

Procedure if you Wish to Complain

Stage One – Informal

You should raise the matter at issue with the relevant Manager or his/her staff in order that it can be dealt with directly by the staff responsible for that school/service. It is preferable for all concerned that complaints be dealt with amicably and informally wherever possible.

Complaints about Company Directors in connection with their Executive responsibilities will receive a response from Directors under Stage 3 below.

All complaints will be made known to the Company Directors but dealt with at the appropriate level of management.

If this course of action proves unsatisfactory then proceed to Stage Two.

Stage Two – Formal

You should contact the company with full written details of your complaint by completing a complaints form (see Appendix 1), please include details of any response already received at Stage One and set out fully why you are not satisfied.

Freedom of Information and Re-use of Public Sector Information complaints:

If you want an internal review [because you object either for the response you received to your request or about some aspect of the way your request was processed, or if you consider we are not complying with our privacy statement] you should provide full written details of why you are unhappy to the relevant member of staff under Stage One.

If the complaint is considered to be justified, we will examine any options which may exist for remedying the complaint to your satisfaction. A written response to the complaint will be sent to you within 10 working days. Where this is not possible you will be sent an acknowledgement with an estimate of the likely timescale for response.

The letter of response to your complaint will indicate that if you are still unhappy with The Outdoors Group Ltd's response, you may request one of the Company Directors to consider your complaint, proceeding to Stage Three.

Stage Three - Formal

If you are not satisfied with the member of staff's response to your complaint at Stage Two, of your complaint concerns a Company Director in connection with their Executive responsibilities, you should contact Head Office. At this stage, you will be asked to state specifically the full reasons for your (continuing) dissatisfaction.

Please send a further completed form (Appendix 1) enclosing all supporting and relevant information to Head Office. Your complaint form will be acknowledged, recorded, and reviewed by a Director, who has not already been involved at Stage Two.

If the Director considers your complaint to be justified, he will consider any possible courses of action open to the Company, to resolve it and to determine the response to be made.

Where Stage Three of the complaints procedure is reached, a panel of three people not involved in the matters detailed in the complaint will be convened; they will review the complaint and all associated documentation and will provide a decision and a response. One member of this panel must be independent of The Outdoors School/Group. Where such a panel has been convened a hearing may be attended by the complainant to express their views and case for complaint. The complainant may be accompanied to this hearing should they wish.

The members of the panel who consider your complaint will normally respond to you within 15 working days of the hearing for the complaint. This response will include details of your rights to refer the matter to any relevant Ombudsman (or, in the case of Freedom of Information/Re-use of Public Sector Information, to the Information Commissioner).

All copies of the panel's findings and recommendations will be made available to the following people:

- The complainant
- The subject of the complaint (where appropriate)
- The Headteacher of The Outdoors School/Head of Business Area (where appropriate)
- The Proprietor and Directors

Additional Information

All complaints that become a formal issue (Stage Two or above, or those of any nature that are provided in writing to The Outdoors School/Group) will be kept securely, along with any notes and recommendations made and the level at which the

complaint was dealt with. These records will be kept securely for the time stipulated by the statutory guidance.

All complaints relating to The Outdoors School are kept on record and will be available for inspection at the school office by the Headteacher and the Proprietors.

All records of complaints will be kept securely and confidentially except where they are requested by:

- The Secretary of State
- An inspection body such as Ofsted or the Independent School Inspectorate

Contact Information

By email to: complaints@outdoorsgroup.co.uk

By post to: Company Secretary, The Outdoors Group Ltd, Western Lodge, Crediton, Devon, EX17 3NH