



## The Story Island Project Grievance Policy – Staff

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this *Grievance Policy* is to provide a framework for the handling of grievances in a fair and timely manner.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff of the Story Island Project.

### **Definition**

A work-related grievance is any problem, concern or complaint in relation to the staff member's work environment, including changes to the staff member's role, their safety or the behaviour of others in the workplace.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

It is the role of the President of the Story Island Project Board to manage grievance complaints from staff.

If the grievance complaint concerns the President, it is the role of the Senior Vice-President to manage the complaint.

### **1 Introduction**

The aim of this *Grievance Policy* is to settle grievances or complaints fairly, simply and quickly. Every effort will be made to resolve grievances at the earliest possible stage. At each stage efforts will be made to avoid proceeding to the next stage and to settle the issue amicably.

If a staff member has a problem with any other member of staff or a volunteer, and is unable to sort it out informally, the matter should be referred to the President. You may be able to agree to an informal solution between you. Informal approaches are encouraged.

In certain circumstances it may, with mutual agreement, be helpful to consider using an independent third party to help resolve the problem. In some cases, an external mediator might be appropriate. Mediation does not decide on who is right or wrong. Nor can the parties be forced to undertake mediation – it must be a purely voluntary process.

If the problem is serious, or remains unresolved, or the staff member wishes to raise the matter formally, the staff member can use the formal grievance procedure outlined below.

## 2 The Procedure

First step	Second step	Third step
<p>Staff member has a conversation with the President about their grievance.</p> <p>President will aim to resolve the grievance at this step.</p>	<p>Staff member puts their grievance in writing and gives it to the President.</p> <p>President arranges a meeting to hear the staff member's grievance and will inform the staff member of their decision in writing.</p>	<p>Staff member can appeal the decision of the grievance meeting (second step) by writing a letter of appeal to the President of the Story Island Project Board.</p> <p>An Appeal Panel (made up of members of the Board) will meet to hear the staff member's appeal and will inform the staff member of their decision in writing.</p> <p>The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.</p>

### i) Informal resolution

As a first step, the Story Island Project encourages staff members to speak to the President if they have a grievance. The grievance may be able to be resolved informally.

If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, the staff member can raise a formal grievance in writing, and it will be dealt with by the President as outlined below. If the staff member is not happy with the decision at any step, they can take the next step in this procedure.

(Please note: if a staff member has a grievance with the President, they can follow the procedure below with the Senior Vice-President.)

### ii) Raise the grievance in writing

The staff member should raise their grievance in writing with the President without unreasonable delay, normally within one month of the incident (or final incident) which gives rise to the complaint.

Whoever deals with the grievance at the grievance meeting will be excluded from hearing any appeal.

The staff member must detail in writing the specific circumstance or circumstances which constitute the grievance, with dates, times, witnesses, etc. as applicable. The staff member should stick to the facts and avoid insulting or abusive language.

Where a staff member has difficulty expressing themselves because of language or other difficulties they may like to seek help from a colleague.

### **iii) Invitation to a Grievance Meeting**

The President/Senior Vice-President will invite the staff member to attend a meeting, without unavoidable delay, to discuss the matter.

The meeting should ideally be arranged within five working days of receiving the written grievance.

The President/Senior Vice-President will also state that the staff member is entitled to be accompanied by a colleague at the meeting.

This colleague can speak at the meeting on behalf of the staff member, but they cannot answer questions put directly to the staff member.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for staff members with disability, such as allowing a support worker or sign language interpreter to attend the meeting.

### **iv) Grievance Meeting**

A note taker, who must be uninvolved in the case, will take down a record of the proceedings.

The President/Senior Vice-President will introduce the meeting, read out the grounds of the staff member's grievance, ask the staff member if the information is correct and ask the staff member to provide clarification regarding details of the grievance if unclear.

The staff member will be given the opportunity to put forward her/his case and say how they would like to see it resolved. The staff member may call witnesses and refer to any documents previously provided to the President/Senior Vice-President.

The President/Senior Vice-President may question the staff member and any of the staff member's witnesses.

The staff member will be given the opportunity to sum up but may not introduce any new material.

The meeting may be adjourned by the President/Senior Vice-President if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. Any necessary investigations will be carried out to establish the facts of the case. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible.

Generally, a meeting will be adjourned before a decision is taken. This allows time for reflection and proper consideration. It also allows for any further checking of any matters raised.

Having considered the grievance, the President/ Senior Vice-President will give her/his decision regarding the case in writing to the staff member and this will normally be within five working days. If appropriate, the decision will set out what action the organisation intends to take to resolve the grievance or if the grievance is not upheld, will explain the reasons. This will also include notifying the staff member of her/his right of appeal and of the procedure to be followed.

Any staff member who is the subject of a grievance should be provided with an opportunity to respond to the complaints made against them.

#### **v) Appeal**

If still unresolved, the staff member may refer the matter, in writing, to the President of the Board of the Story Island Project, or if the President has already been involved in an earlier stage of the procedure, to the Senior Vice-President.

The staff member wishing to appeal against a grievance decision must do so in writing within five working days of receiving written notification of the grievance decision, stating the reasons for the appeal. Any documents submitted in support of the appeal must be attached.

Arrangements for the appeal meeting will be made by the President (or the Senior Vice-President if appropriate) who will ensure that a note taker is present. The appeal meeting should be held without unavoidable delay. At least two members of the Board will constitute an Appeal Panel. The Board members hearing the appeal should have had no direct involvement in the case.

The staff member is entitled to be accompanied by a colleague at the appeal.

The meeting may be adjourned by the Appeal Panel, if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible.

The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be final.

#### **Documentation**

All documentation regarding the grievance should be added to the file of the staff member.