MENTAL ROOTS

Complaints & Feedback Policy

Document owner: Nathan Addai, Founder — Mental Roots
Version: 1.0
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Applies to: All Mental Roots activities, online and in-person — compliments, comments and complaints
Companion documents: Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy; Booking & Sales Terms and Conditions; Data Protection & GDPR Policy; Privacy Notice; Photography, Filming & Image Consent Policy

1. Mental Roots Values and Statement

1.1 Mental Roots teaches young people aged 11–25 to create 2D animation as a way of supporting self-expression, wellbeing and career development. We deliver in-person workshops in schools and community venues, Animation Social sessions for adults, and an online course and community. We aim to do this to a high standard, but we know we will sometimes get things wrong, and that not everyone will agree with what we do.

1.2 We welcome and value feedback. It helps us to listen, learn and improve what we do and how we do it, for the benefit of the young people and adults we work with. We try to handle feedback in line with our values of curiosity, empathy, respect and creativity.

1.3 This policy explains who, how and where you can make a compliment, comment or complaint about Mental Roots, our services, our online content, or the conduct of Nathan Addai and anyone working with or on behalf of Mental Roots.

2. Who This Policy Is For

2.1 **External.** This policy applies to young people, parents and carers, schools, community organisations and venues that host or book us, Animation Social attendees and other adult learners, online course and community members, and members of the public. You can use it to comment on, compliment or complain about our services, workshops, online content and social media, bookings and payments, or the conduct of the Founder Nathan Addai and anyone working with or representing Mental Roots, including any future facilitators, volunteers or contractors.

2.2 **Young people under 18.** A young person can raise a concern or complaint themselves, or a parent/carer or a member of staff at the host school or organisation can raise it for them. Because Mental Roots does not hold direct contact details for anyone under 18 (Data Protection & GDPR Policy §7), we encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult, such as a parent/carer or the host staff member who is present at every session, who can contact us on their behalf. If a young person tells us something that suggests they or

another child may be at risk of harm, we will follow the Safeguarding Policy (§8) rather than this policy.

2.3 **Internal.** Mental Roots currently has no employees. If we take on staff, freelance facilitators, volunteers, interns or contractors, they will not use this policy for their own concerns. A separate grievance and whistleblowing route will be put in place at that point, alongside the Safeguarding Policy for any safeguarding concern. They can give compliments and comments directly to Nathan.

3. Complimenting Us

3.1 Compliments are valuable to us. When we receive one it will be recorded and, where useful, reported on, for example in funding applications or reports to partners.

3.2 Compliments help us to:

- understand what we do well and the positive difference it makes;
- recognise good work, including by anyone working with us;
- influence the continued development of our workshops, course and community.

3.3 We will only share a compliment publicly (on our website, on social media, or in funding or marketing materials) with the permission of the person who gave it, and we will agree with them how they would like to be named, or whether they would prefer to stay anonymous. We will not name or identify a young person under 18 in a public compliment without their parent/carer's permission.

4. Commenting on Us or Our Work

4.1 It is always helpful to hear what people think about what we do and how we do it. Comments are welcome because they:

- help us maintain the standards of our workshops, course and community;
- influence decisions we make about format, content and pricing;
- raise issues that matter and can lead to change for the better.

4.2 We record the comments we receive and review them at least once a year. We will try to acknowledge comments wherever possible, but this may not always be practicable. Please be assured they are always appreciated.

5. Complaining About Us or Our Work

5.1 We recognise that there will be times when we, or those working on our behalf, make mistakes or get things wrong. Where we receive a complaint we will take it seriously, record it, deal with it in a timely way, and report on it internally and externally where required (for example, to the host school or organisation or to our insurer).

5.2 We will always take steps to keep your personal information confidential. We will only share it with people who need to know to investigate your complaint and, rarely, with others where we are legally permitted or required to do so. For example, if a complaint raises a safeguarding concern we may need to share it with the local authority, the police or the host organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

5.3 Complaint records are kept securely, in line with our Data Protection & GDPR Policy. General complaint records are kept for six years from the date the complaint is closed.

Records connected to a safeguarding matter are kept for the longer period set out in the Safeguarding Policy (§9).

6. Defining a Complaint

6.1 We define a complaint as “an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action by Mental Roots, or by someone acting on behalf of Mental Roots.”

6.2 Where it is unclear whether a communication is a complaint, we will try to confirm this with you. If a communication is made anonymously, we may not be able to treat it as a complaint under this policy.

6.3 The following issues (this is not an exhaustive list) will be treated as complaints because they touch on Mental Roots' purpose and values:

- poor standards of service or delivery, including accusations of professional incompetence or misconduct;
- workshop, course or community content that you feel is unsuitable for the age or needs of participants;
- problems with bookings, cancellations, refunds or payments (see our Booking & Sales Terms and Conditions);
- problems accessing purchased online course content that we are able to fix;
- concerns about how personal data, images or participants' work have been used (see our Privacy Notice and Photography, Filming & Image Consent Policy);
- discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment, or non-compliance with our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy;
- concerns about content on our social media or TikTok Lives, or about how our online community is moderated;
- misleading marketing or claims about what we offer;
- harm, or risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable person by anyone working for Mental Roots (see section 10.2, which applies instead of the normal process);
- dishonesty or criminality involving Mental Roots;
- non-compliance with our own policies and procedures; and
- non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

6.4 Under certain circumstances we may not be able to respond to a complaint, including where:

- you have not identified yourself or given contact details;
- your complaint is not about Mental Roots (for example, it is about a host school or venue's own arrangements, the Future Skills Hub platform or payment system, or TikTok or Instagram). In these cases, we will point you to the right organisation, and with your agreement can pass your concern on;
- your complaint is not clear enough for us to understand;
- your complaint has been sent to us and other organisations as part of a bulk mailing or email; or
- your complaint contains abusive language directed at Mental Roots or at the people and partners we work with. This includes racist, homophobic, biphobic, sexist, ableist, classist or transphobic content, and language about nationality, religion or any other protected characteristic, or any commentary that runs counter to the Equality Act 2010.

6.5 Even in those situations, we will still take appropriate complaints seriously and deal with them properly, including contacting you where we can to discuss the matter further.

> Please note: Concerns about a child's safety or welfare do not need to go through this complaints process first. Follow the Safeguarding Policy (§8) straight away, or contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

7. Sharing Your Compliments, Comments and Complaints With Us

7.1 You can share your feedback in any of the following ways:

How	Details
Email (preferred)	mentalrootspod@gmail.com
Through your host	If you are connected to us through a school or organisation, you can ask your contact there to pass your feedback on to us, with your agreement
By post or telephone	Available on request. Email us and we will arrange this

7.2 Please include what happened, when it happened, who was involved, and what outcome you would like. Complaints made verbally (for example in a phone call, or in person at a session) will be written up and confirmed back to you so we know we have understood you correctly.

7.3 If you need support to make a complaint, for example because of a disability, language, or your age, please tell us and we will make reasonable adjustments.

7.4 If your complaint is about Nathan's own personal conduct, please say so at the start of your message. It will be dealt with as set out in section 10.

8. Our Process for Dealing With Complaints

8.1 **Informal resolution.** Many concerns are best resolved quickly through a conversation. Where you are happy for us to, we will try to resolve your concern informally. You can still make a formal complaint if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

8.2 **Acknowledgement.** Where a complaint has been submitted in line with section 7, we will acknowledge it within five working days, explain the process that will be followed, and tell you when a decision will be made. “Working days” means Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.

8.3 **Investigation.** We will carry out a thorough and fair investigation to establish the facts. This may include speaking to host staff or others who were present, and reviewing booking details, messages and platform records. Where your complaint is about a session in a school or organisation, we may need to speak to the host, and will discuss this with you first unless there is a safeguarding reason not to.

8.4 **Response.** We will attempt to provide a full written response within 15 working days. If this is not possible, we will tell you why and give you the date by which you are likely to receive a response.

8.5 **What the response will say.** Our response will set out what we found, any action we are taking (for example an apology, a refund, a re-run session, or a change to how we work), and how and to whom you can appeal if you wish to contest the outcome. An appeal must be made in writing within 15 working days of the date of our outcome letter, and must meet one of the criteria in section 9.

8.6 **Payments and refunds.** Complaints about payments or refunds will be considered alongside our Booking & Sales Terms and Conditions. Nothing in this policy affects your statutory consumer rights.

8.7 **Insurance.** Where a complaint could lead to a claim, we will notify our insurer (Simply Business) promptly, as our policy requires.

8.8 **Learning from complaints.** We keep a log of complaints and their outcomes. We review it at least annually, and whenever we review our policies, so that patterns lead to real changes to our workshops, content or ways of working.

9. Appealing Our Response

9.1 An appeal must be made in writing and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- you have new, relevant information to present that you have not previously submitted;
- we failed to consider adequately, or at all, information you gave us in connection with your complaint; or
- the response to your complaint is perverse, in that no reasonable person could have reached that conclusion based on the information provided to them.

9.2 Appeals will be considered by the Independent Reviewer (see section 10). We will acknowledge your appeal within five working days and attempt to give a full response within 15 working days. If this is not possible, we will tell you and give you a date by which you are likely to receive a response.

9.3 Our response to your appeal will always be in writing and is final. There is no further route within Mental Roots, but section 11 lists external organisations you can contact.

Summary: Complaints and Appeals Quick Reference

Stage	What happens
Complaint	Received (in writing is preferred; verbal complaints are written up and confirmed back to you). Acknowledged within 5 working days. We aim to respond in full within 15 working days.
Appeal	Must be made in writing within 15 working days of the outcome letter and must meet one of the criteria in section 9. Acknowledged within 5 working days. We aim to give a full and final response within 15 working days.
Safeguarding concern	Does not follow this process. See the Safeguarding Policy (§8) and section 10.2.

10. Complaints About the Business Owner and Independent Review

10.1 Mental Roots is currently owned and run by one person, Nathan Addai himself. Therefore, Nathan cannot fairly investigate a complaint about his own personal conduct or review an appeal against his own decision. To keep the process fair, Mental Roots will use an Independent Reviewer: a person with no financial interest in Mental Roots, appointed by Nathan. Complaints will be handled as follows:

Type of complaint	Investigated by	Appeal considered by
Services, bookings, content, payments or other complaints about Mental Roots' work	Nathan Addai	Independent Reviewer
Nathan's own personal conduct (not a safeguarding allegation, see 10.2)	Independent Reviewer	No further internal appeal. See section 11
Independent Reviewer	[Name and contact details to be added]	

10.2 **Safeguarding allegations.** Any allegation or concern that Nathan, or anyone working on behalf of Mental Roots, has harmed a child, behaved in a way that may pose a risk to children, or may be unsuitable to work with children will not be handled under this policy. It will be passed to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for the relevant local authority within one working day of being received, and to the police where a crime may have been committed. The host school or organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed unless the LADO advises otherwise. Mental Roots will not investigate the allegation itself and will co-operate fully. You can also contact the LADO or the police directly at any time.

11. Taking Your Complaint Outside Mental Roots

11.1 If you remain dissatisfied with our response, you are entitled to take your concerns to any relevant organisation, including but not limited to:

Organisation	Can help with	Contact
Citizens Advice	Free advice on consumer issues such as workshop bookings, course purchases and refunds	citizensadvice.org.uk
Trading Standards	Concerns about consumer law	gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office
Information Commissioner's Office	Concerns about how personal data has been handled	ico.org.uk | 0303 123 1113
Advertising Standards Authority	Misleading advertising or marketing, including on social media	asa.org.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and children's social care	Allegations about an adult working with children, or a child who may be at risk	Via the local authority where the child lives or the concern arose

NSPCC Helpline	Adults concerned about a child	0808 800 5000 | help@nspcc.org.uk
Childline	Young people who want to talk to someone	0800 1111 | childline.org.uk
Police	Concerns about a crime	999 (emergency) | 101 (non-emergency)

11.2 If your concern is about a host school or organisation's own arrangements, please use that organisation's own complaints procedure. For concerns about content on a platform, you can also use the reporting tools on Future Skills Hub, TikTok or Instagram.

12. Framework and Guidance

12.1 This policy takes account of relevant legal requirements, regulations and guidance, including:

- the Children Acts 1989 and 2004;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (HM Government);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (DfE), applied as best practice for non-school settings;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, which apply to how we keep and share complaint information;
- the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and the Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013, which apply to complaints about paid services and digital content;
- the Online Safety Act 2023, as it applies to online content and communities; and
- Mental Roots' own Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, Booking & Sales Terms and Conditions, Data Protection & GDPR Policy, Privacy Notice, and Photography, Filming & Image Consent Policy.

13. Review

Item	Detail
Date of this review	October 2026
Next review date	October 2027
Reviewed by	Nathan Addai
Position / role	Founder, Mental Roots

Signature:

Date: 08/10/2026