

This kind of guidance is meant to help folk get a sense of what the Star & Shadow is about and how things work. Our full policies are available on OwnCloud, accessible through the volunteer toolkit. Like most things at the Star & Shadow, this is a work in progress: collectives can edit, amend, or scrap processes through our collective decision-making

Our Collective Commitment to Community, Accountability, and Conflict Resolution

As a non-hierarchical and minimalist organisation, we are driven by an ethos of shared responsibility, trust, and mutual respect. With the support of hundreds of volunteers, we work together to create a unique community space that honours individual expression and collective ownership.

In line with our values, decisions are made collectively, and each voice is valued equally. We avoid rigid structures. While certain roles, like key holders, carry responsibilities for safety and security, they do not hold power over others: their role is simply to help smooth and secure functioning of our shared space. The mediation collective is part of how Star & Shadow ensures a smooth running of our cinema.

Our Approach to Conflict Resolution

In any diverse community, conflict is inevitable. Personalities and perspectives will always differ, and sometimes people will rub each other the wrong way. We embrace this diversity, and we respect each member's right to be themselves. Most of the time, issues are resolved simply and privately, as they are in other collective spaces: through direct, respectful conversations. It might help to think of the Star & Shadow like a public park: just as you might ask someone in the park to keep their music down or choose to move to another area, we ask our members to share space with consideration, recognising there are multiple ways to coexist.

Our conflict resolution process supports members when issues need additional attention. There are several aspects to it:

- **Mediation:** Restoring trust or reestablishing a working relationship when communication has broken down.
- **Disciplinary Action:** For instances where someone's actions threaten others' safety, or the well-being of the organisation.
- **Safeguarding:** If you choose to make disclosures that identify you as an adult at risk of harm, safeguarding may become involved to ensure we support you.

If a serious issue arises, such as harassment or assault, we do not expect mediation to be the route forward. In these cases, speak directly with someone in a trusted role who can help ensure safety and well-being in a way that reflects the gravity of the situation.

Directness, Not Gossip

As a community, we value open and direct communication. Rather than fostering gossip, we encourage members to be straightforward when tensions arise. We understand that it can be difficult to approach someone directly, particularly when feelings are strained; mediation can be an effective tool to facilitate constructive conversations. Mediation is not about assigning blame or deciding who is "right"; instead, it is about creating space where both sides can express their needs, make agreements, or simply establish mutual respect.

Mediation is here to help, but it is not a shortcut or a solution “done for you.” It requires genuine commitment from everyone involved. The goal is to move forward in a way that everyone can feel good about. This might include an apology, a change in behaviour, or an agreement to give each other more space.

Volunteers can have strong feelings about situations requiring mediation, but we need to acknowledge that we may not have the full picture. Gossip can be very harmful to the individuals involved in mediation (including the mediators) and the mediation process.

With, Not For

Our collective operates on a “with, not for” principle. It means each person has a role in shaping relationships and experiences here. This community belongs to all of us, and we share responsibility for making it a place where everyone can thrive.

Confidentiality

Typically, mediation takes place confidentially, but this can include advocates and/or named volunteers at the request of those involved.

Because these processes are confidential, there can be a sense across the wider volunteer base that an issue is not being addressed or that courses of actions are unfair. We ask that you trust the process and that volunteers interested in mediation bring their energy to the work of continually reviewing and improving our processes.

Mediation Is:

- A tool for restoring trust: Used when a working relationship or trust has broken down.
- A collaborative process: Both parties must actively participate and be willing to engage.
- Focused on moving forward: Aims to find workable solutions rather than assigning blame.
- Support for direct conversation: Helps members who struggle to address conflicts directly.
- Outcome-oriented: Results could include apology, behavioural adjustments, or agreements on boundaries.

Mediation Isn't:

- A disciplinary measure: Serious issues (e.g., harassment or assault) should be reported to trusted people for other forms of intervention.
- A mental health service: Mediation isn't designed to provide psychological support or counselling. We aren't trained to do this and could cause more harm.
- A way to “tell on” someone: It's not about getting someone in trouble or proving who's right.
- A passive process: It requires genuine effort from both parties; it's not a “done for you” solution.
- A replacement for self-resolution: Many minor conflicts can and should be resolved privately between adults sharing the space.

If mediation is not successful and there are complex, multiple situations arising we might ask volunteers to step back while we're navigating that. This is not punishment; this is a practical measure to support the process.

Contact 7cz@starandshadow.org.uk with any questions or if you would like mediation support.