

Complaints procedure

It is our stated aim to provide a secure and caring environment in which the children in our care can learn through play. We believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach with the Preschool Manager. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of our setting's provision talks over his/her concerns with the Preschool Manager first of all.
- Most complaints should be able to be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- We will record the issue, and how it was resolved; this will be put in the Complaints File.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form available for recording complaints; the form may be completed by the Preschool Manager or another person nominated by the parent – the form must be signed by the parent.
- Our setting stores all information relating to written complaints from parents in the Complaints File.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Preschool Manager will meet with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- We will inform parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of him/her making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we will log the summative points in the Complaints File, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the Preschool Manager and the Committee Chair. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and the Preschool Manager should have the support of the Committee management team.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made, as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we will log the summative points in the Complaints File.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent cannot reach agreement with the setting, we will invite an external mediator to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers, but can help us to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- The local authority Childcare Development Officer or staff / volunteers within the Early Years Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with staff and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent and the Preschool Manager and Committee Chair is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.
- A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

All settings are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Information Commissioner's Office

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at:
Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231
- These details are displayed on the setting's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, we will follow the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- In these cases, both the parent and the setting are informed and the Preschool Manager will work with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if you have made a complaint about the way your data is being handled and remain dissatisfied after raising

your concern with us. For further information about how we handle your data, please refer to the Privacy Notice given to you when you registered your child at our setting. The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or ico.org.uk

Records

- A record of complaints in relation to the setting, or the children or the adults working in the setting, is kept for at least three years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaints File, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.