

1.9 Making a Complaint

Our setting believes 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 to the appropriate member of staff. 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.

Procedures

All settings are required to keep a written record ('summary log') of any complaints that reach stage 2 and above and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request. Our procedure is as follows:

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the Manager.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage with no formal paperwork.

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 to the Manager and the Chair of the Committee of Trustees.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template complaint form for recording complaints; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the Complaints folder
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Investigation Record book and all paperwork related to the complaint are stored in the Complaints folder.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she can request a meeting with the Manager and the Chair of the Committee of Trustees. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the Manager should have the support of the Chair of the Committee of Trustees present.
- 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, the summative points are logged in the Complaints folder.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and setting cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited 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 to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (Manager and Chair of the Committee of Trustees) 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, the Manager and the Chair of the Committee of Trustees 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. The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Information Commissioner's Office
- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of the complaint's 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 or via email:

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 4666

- These details are displayed on the Preschool's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board.
- In these cases, both the parent and Preschool are informed, and the Manager works with Ofsted or the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership 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 the Preschool. 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 against our Preschool and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the *Complaint Folder* which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.