



Safeguarding children

CP12 Complaints procedure for parents and service users

Policy statement

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 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. A full procedure is set out in the Early Years Alliance publication *Complaint Investigation Record (Pre School Learning Alliance 2021)* which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over their concerns with the manager first of all.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- We record the issue, and how it was resolved, in the child's 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 to the setting manager and/or the chair of trustees.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints in our Complaints Folder; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the manager may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- 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 Complaint Investigation Record which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they request a meeting with the manager and the chair of trustees. The parent can have a friend or partner present if required and the manager should have the support of the chairperson of the 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 Complaint Investigation Record.

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.

- Staff or volunteers within the Early Years Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. They can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (setting manager and chair 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 they give.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded their investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the setting leader personnel 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, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted), the Local Safeguarding Children Board known in Southend as Southend Safeguarding (Children's) Partnership and the Information Commissioner's Office

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this 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 Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at:
- Applications, Regulatory and Contact (ARC) Team, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is:

0300 123 1231

- These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (SSCP) in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the setting manager works with Ofsted or the SSCP to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- *Notice for Parents/Carers:* 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 the setting. For further information about how the setting 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

Agencies

- If an individual from another agency wishes to make a formal complaint about a member of staff or any practice of the setting, it should be made in writing to the setting manager.
- The complaint is acknowledged in writing within 10 days of receiving it.
- The setting manager investigates the matter and meets with the individual to discuss the matter further within 28 days of the complaint being received.
- An agreement needs to be reached to resolve the matter.
- If agreement is not reached, the complainant may write to the setting manager's line manager, who acknowledges the complaint within 5 days and reports back within 14 days.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they are entitled to appeal and are referred to the owners/directors/trustees.

Ofsted complaints record

- Legislation requires settings to keep a record of complaints and disclose these to Ofsted at inspection, or if requested by Ofsted at any other time.
- The record of complaints is a summative record only.

A record of complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.

- In all cases where a complaint is upheld a review will be undertaken by the owners/directors/trustees to look for ways to improve practice where it is required.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

Little Fishes Pre-School

Held on

20/9/11

Date to be reviewed

Reviewed: Autumn Term 2022

Next review: Autumn Term 2023

Signed on behalf of the management
committee

Vicky Baker - Chair

Tracy Parkins - Manager

Other useful Early Years Alliance publications

- Complaint Investigation Record (2021)