

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Information and Records

Providers must put in place a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and/or carers.

10.5 Making a complaint

Policy statement

Our setting believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and requests. 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 such as ours are required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

A full procedure is set out in the Pre-school Learning Alliance publication Complaint Investigation Record (2012) 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 would approach the pre-school manager in the first instance.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

- If there is no satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent should put the concerns or complaint in writing to the pre-school manager and the chair of the management committee.
- For parents who are not comfortable making written complaints; a form may be completed with the assistance of an appropriate staff member at pre-school, 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 pre-school 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 complete, the pre-school manager will discuss the outcome with the parent. The investigation and outcome feedback

should be completed within 28 days of the complaint being made.

- 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 summary points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, a meeting should be requested with the pre-school manager and the chair of the management committee. All individuals have the choice to have a third party present for support, if required.
- A written record of the meeting will be made and all attendees will sign and receive a copy of it.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summary points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 4

- If the parent and pre-school cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited to help to resolve 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 Pre-school Learning Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the pre-school personnel (setting manager and chair of the management committee) and the parent, if it is decided this would 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 investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the pre-school manager and the chair of the management committee 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) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

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 Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.

- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is: 0300 123 4666
- 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 in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and pre-school are informed and the pre-school manager works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- A record of complaints in relation to our setting, or the children 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 Investigation Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.
- Contact details for Ofsted:
Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel:
0300 123 4666

Note:

The management committee will be informed of all complaints made and a summary given of the action taken.

Other useful Pre-School Learning Alliance publications

Complaints Investigation Record (2012)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Witchford Rackham Pre-school

Held on _____

Signed on behalf of the
Management Committee _____

Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory _____

Date to be reviewed _____