

Complaints procedure

If a parent makes a complaint you should be sympathetic and inform the manager/deputy of all the details immediately. The manager will then ask the parent if they would like to discuss the matter further or to arrange a meeting at a later date that is more convenient for them.

Many complaints will be due to a lack of communication and differing expectations. Some complaints might seem quite minor but to a parent/care they are important. Staff need to build good relationships with parents/carers so they feel that they can talk to you regarding any concerns they may have.

Parents have the right to contact Ofsted. The number which is displayed on the parents notice board. Parents are not discouraged to call ofsted but every effort will be made to help them address any concerns or issues. The manager may contact ofsted to seek advice if the matter has not been resolved.

Parent evenings will be held on a regular basis which can also help to provide an informal setting for parents to discuss any worries or concerns.

When the manager is dealing with complaints she will talk to the parents/carers in private where there will be another member of the management team present. She will then write any discussion that takes place. There will be a thorough investigation that takes place where staff will be asked to write a report if necessary. Then the manager will notify the parent of the outcome. Any recommendations of the investigation will be put into practice immediately.

Statement of intent

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.

Aim

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Methods

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure. All settings are required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage 2 or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as Ofsted inspectors.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her worries and anxieties with the nursery manager.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parents move to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the setting leader and the owner or management.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints in the above-mentioned publication; 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 setting leader 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 setting leader or manager meets with the parents to discuss the outcome.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the setting leader and the owner/chair of the management committee. The parents should have a friend or partner present if required and the leader should have the support of the chairperson of the management committee, or the proprietor/senior manager, 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 Summary Record.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent and setting cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited to help settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has not 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 discussion confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (setting leader and owner/chair of the management committee) 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 setting leader and the owner/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 Area Safeguarding Children Committee.

- 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 National Standards for Day Care are adhered to.
- The address and telephone number of our Ofsted regional centre are:
 - THE NATIONAL BUSINESS UNIT
 - OFSTED
 - THE ROYAL EXCHANGE BUILDINGS
 - ST ANNS SQUARE
 - MANCHESTER M2 7LA/ TEL 03001231231
- These details are also displayed on our setting's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee in our local authority.

- In these cases, both the parents and setting are informed and the setting leader works with Ofsted or the Area Safeguarding Children Committee to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- A record of complaints against our setting 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 Complaints Record file which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.