

Safeguarding children

Making a complaint

Policy statement

Our school 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 school and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the school. 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 school to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. It is our aim to inform parents of the outcome of any investigation within 28 days of making the complaint at any stage of the complaints procedure.

Procedures

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the school’s provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the setting leader/ class teacher.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- **Maximum time to resolve the complaint at this stage is 2 weeks from the date of complaint received.**

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 group leader/ Class Teacher.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints will be available from all class teachers or in the office; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.
- The school stores written complaints received from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the group leader/ class teacher may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint. All information will be saved in the SIMS.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the group leader/ class teacher meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.
- **Maximum time to resolve the complaint at this stage will be 28 days from the date complaint received in writing.**

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she can request a meeting with the group leader/ class teacher/ the head of the department and or the principal. The parent can have a friend or partner present if required and the group leader/ class teacher should have the support of the head of the department/ principal 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.
- **This meeting will be arranged within 2 weeks of the date of request received from the parent.**

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and school cannot reach agreement, an external mediator together with two additional personnel from the school that have not been involved in the complaint are invited to help to settle the complaint. These persons 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 school personnel (group leader/ class teacher/ Head of Department and or Principal) 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 parents, the group leader/ class teacher and the Head of Department and or Principal 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 mediator's decision will be final and binding on both parties.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

- If parents are not happy with the outcome of the formal complaint they may contact Department for Education (DfE) directly. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the school registration requirements, it is essential to involve DfE as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the school are adhered to.
- The number to call DfE with regard to a complaint is:

0370 000 2288

Parents can write to DfE on the address below.

Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

- These details are displayed on our schools notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our school follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and school are informed and the group leader/ class teacher/ Head of Department/ Principal work with DfE or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- A record of complaints against our school and/or the children and/or the adults working in our school 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 Summary Complaints Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.
- Details of all complaints will remain confidential at all times and will only be available to those concerned.

Number of Complaints in the past 2 years: There have been no formal complaints in the last 2 years

This policy was adopted on

Monday 19th January 2009

Date reviewed

Saturday 31st October 2009

Date Reviewed

December 2014

Date Reviewed

March 2015

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Summary Complaints Record