

Complaints procedure

Statement of intent

We believe 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 via the suggestion box (suggestions may be anonymous) or directly to a member of the staff or committee. All suggestions will be treated with discretion and we 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 to Ofsted inspectors. A full procedure is detailed in our 'Complaints Summary Record' from the Pre-school Learning Alliance. This publication acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

Making a complaint

Stage 1: Verbal Complaint

- It is recommended that any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over their worries and anxieties with their child's key person, the setting leader, or any member of the committee.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2: Written Formal Complaint and Investigation

If an issue is not resolved satisfactorily or the problem recurs:

- Parents should put their concerns or complaint in writing to the setting leader and the chair of the management committee.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form available or the parent may call Ofsted as detailed below.
- 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 meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- If the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the setting leader and the chair of the management committee (chair). The parent is entitled to the support of a friend or partner and the leader should have the support of the chair 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.

Stage 3: Independent Mediation

- If necessary Ofsted, or an external mediator (such as the Pre-school Learning Alliance) will be called at this point to investigate. The complainant and defendant will be told what will happen next and when they will get an answer.
- The mediator will keep all discussion confidential and may hold separate meetings with the setting personnel or the parent if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator will keep a written record of any meetings held and any advice given.
- Once the final investigations of the committee chair, Ofsted or a mediator are complete a final meeting between the parent and the setting will be held. A record of this meeting including any actions to be taken is made. The record is signed by everyone present at the meeting and they receive a copy.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record and the record signed

Stage 4

If it is felt that further action is needed by either party legal advice should be sought by both parties

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted)

- 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 contact details for Ofsted :

Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA

08456 404040

- These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.

The role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority as set out in our Child Protection Policy.
- Any complaint, verbal or written regarding a child protection issue and a member of staff will be referred immediately to Ofsted and the LSCB
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the setting leader works with Ofsted or the LSCB to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- A record of complaints concerning our setting and/or the adults working in our setting is kept. This will include the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed. When a

Child Protection issue is involved a separate record will be kept by the designated Child Protection Officer

- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaints Summary Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

Whistleblowing

If a member of staff or parent wishes to complain about another member of staff, a committee member or the Child Protection Officer they are entitled to do so. Confidentiality will be maintained and they will also be protected in this event. The procedure from Stage 2 above will be followed.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Linton Granta Playgroup and Toddlers

Held on (date) 07/12/2007

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee/Proprietor

Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson etc.)

To be reviewed on (date) By December 2008