Complaints Policy

Statement of intent

Our pre-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 pre-school and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the pre-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.

Aim

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

Implementation

A parent who has a complaint regarding an aspect of the provision should first discuss it with the pre-school manager. If a satisfactory outcome is not achieved, or if the problem recurs the parent is asked to put a complaint in writing and request a meeting with the pre-school manager and the committee chairperson. A support person for the parent is welcome to attend the meeting. An agreed written record of the discussion will be made. Should the complaint not be sorted out to the parent's satisfaction or not resolved, the committee in consultation with the parent would refer the matter to Ofsted.

We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the pre-school, which may include an allegation of abuse. Details of how parents can contact Ofsted are displayed on the pre-school notice board. Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 4666 or emailed on enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

It is the right of the parent to contact Ofsted at any time directly.

The Stages

Stage 1

Any parent who is uneasy about an aspect of the pre-school's provision should in the first instance speak to the pre-school manager about his/her worries and anxieties. Where a complaint or allegation is made, the registered person/manager will consider the nature of the complaint/allegation before making a decision on action to be taken.

Where the complaint or allegation implies that Child Protection is an issue – we have a child protection policy to cover this type of allegation.

Stage 2

If stage 1 does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the pre-school manager and the chairperson.

This complaint will be investigated and complainant notified of outcome within 28 days of receipt.

Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally at Stage 1 or at Stage 2.

Stage 3

If the matter is still not resolved the parent requests a meeting with the pre-school manager and the chairperson. Both the parent and the manager should have a friend or partner present if required.

An agreed written record of the discussion is made. 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.

Stage 4

If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent and pre-school 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 discussion confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the pre-school personnel (pre-school manager and chairperson) 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 pre-school manager and the chairperson 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 (OFSTED) EARLY YEARS DIRECTORATE AND THE AREA CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of our registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Early Years Foundation Stage welfare requirements are adhered to.

The address and telephone number of Ofsted is:

Telephone: 0300 123 4666
Address: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

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

If a child appears to be at risk, our pre-school follows the procedures of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

In these cases, both the parent and pre-school are informed and the pre-school manager works with Ofsted or the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint followed by appropriate action.

If the nature of the complaint is regarding handling data or a breach of data regulations please address concerns to the manager. If you are concerned about the way data is handled and remain concerned you have a right to contact the Information Commissioner Office (ICO) at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or via their website https://ico.org.uk

RECORDS

A record of complaints against our pre-school and/or the children and/or the adults working in our pre-school is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

Date policy adopted / reviewed November 2026

Signed on behalf of the Pre-School Trustees _____

Name and position of signatory Denise Smith, Chair

Policy review date **November 2027**