

Making a complaint

Policy statement

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 and take any concerns about the setting or staff very seriously. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach with the appropriate member of staff and Manager (if required). 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

We are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of our setting's provision talks over his/her concerns with the manager first of all.
- 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 parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, notes may be completed the manager or deputy and signed by the parent.
- Our setting stores all information relating to written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, our 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 completed, the manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- We inform parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of him/her making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the manager. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and the manager should have the support of a Deputy or SENCO in their absence.
- 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 will be sent a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent cannot reach agreement with the Manager, we invite an external mediator 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 us to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved. This may be the Bexley Early Years Advisor or Project Officer.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent and the manager 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.
- 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, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Information Commissioner's Office

- 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 Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at:
Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231
- If a child appears to be at risk, we follow the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Partners

- In these cases, both the parent and our setting are informed and our manager work with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Partners to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- Where the complaint is regarding a member of staff the Local Advisory Designated Officer of Bexley is contacted (LADO)
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if you have made a complaint about the way our data is being handled, and remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us. For further information about how we handle your data, please refer to the Privacy Notice Policy. The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or ico.org.uk

Records

- A record of complaints in relation to our setting, or the children or the adults working in our setting, is kept for at least three years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.

Signed by Deputy Manager		
Signed by Manager		