

# ***Complaints Policy***

## **Statement of Intent**

We believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and concerns. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give serious attention to any complaints. We anticipate that most problems will be able to be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. However, if this is not successful, we have a set of procedures for dealing with complaints.

## **Aims**

- To ensure that parents are informed as to how to initiate a complaint.
- To reassure parents that they can approach us in complete confidentiality if they so wish.
- To bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

## **In order to fulfil these aims**

### **How to initiate complaint**

#### *Stage 1*

- Any parent who is uneasy about an aspect of the settings' provision is invited to firstly talk over his/her worries and anxieties with the Pre-School Leader and/or member of the management team.

#### *Stage 2*

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent should put the concerns or complaint in writing to the Pre-School Leader and management team.
- The parent will receive a response to the complaint within 28 days of the complaint being received.

#### *Stage 3*

- The parent may request a meeting with the Pre-School Leader and management team. Both the parent and the playgroup representatives may 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 setting cannot reach agreement, an external mediator may be invited to help to settle the complaint. The mediator may be the Foundation Stage Consultant or a pre-school field worker. 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.

- The mediator keeps all discussion confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the chairperson of the setting and the parent, if this is deemed 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 Leader and the management team 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 Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board**

- 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 National Standards for Day Care are adhered to.
- If a child appears to be at risk, we will follow the procedures of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board. See our [Safeguarding Children Policy](#)
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the Pre-School Leader works with OfSTED or Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board 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 record is kept in the Complaints File and will be retained in line with requirements under the National Standards for 10 years.

### **Contact details**

Children's Help Desk (Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board) 01452 426565  
OfSTED, The national Business Unit, OfSTED, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD, 0300 123 1231  
Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) 01452 426994 or 583638