

## Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Information and Records

### 10.8 Making a complaint

#### **Policy statement**

Our Nursery 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 Nursery School and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the Nursery 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 Nursery School to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

#### **Procedures**

All Nursery Schools are required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors. A full procedure is set out in the PLA publication *Complaints Investigation Record* (2015) which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

#### *Making a complaint*

##### Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the Nursery School's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the Nursery School Head.
- 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 to the Nursery School Head.

- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints in the above-mentioned publication; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.
- The Nursery School stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Nursery School Head 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 Nursery School Head meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Investigation Record.

### Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the Nursery School Head. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the Head should have the Deputy 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 Investigation Record.

### Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and Nursery 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 PLA and Children's Links are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.

- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the Nursery School personnel (Nursery School Head and Deputy) 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 Nursery School Head and Deputy 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, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and 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 Nursery School's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is:  
0300 1231231 (04.05.2012) (08.01.2017)

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- These details are displayed on our Nursery School's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our Nursery School follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and Nursery School are informed and the Nursery School Head works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if you have made a complaint about the way your data is being handled and you remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us. For further information about how we handle your data, please refer to the Privacy Notice given to you in our Parent Handbook.

The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk)

### *Records*

- A record of complaints against our Nursery School and/or the children and/or the adults working in our Nursery 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 Complaints Investigation Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

### **Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

- Complaints Investigation Record (2015)