



10 Working in partnership with parents and other agencies procedures

10.2 Complaints procedure for parents and service users

There is a fair way of dealing with issues as they arise in an informal way, but parents may wish to exercise their right to make a formal complaint. They are informed of the procedure to do this and complaints are responded to in a timely way. The same procedures apply to agencies who may have a grievance or complaint.

- **Step 1: Informal Discussion:** Parents are encouraged to address their concerns informally either with the staff member involved or with the key worker of their child. The key person will listen to the parent and acknowledge what he/she is unhappy about. The key person will offer an explanation and an apology if appropriate. Many issues can be resolved at this stage through open communication.
- **Step 2: Formal Complaint:** If the parent is not happy with the key person's response or wishes to complain about the key person or any other member of staff, he/she will be directed to the setting manager. Some parents will want to make a written complaint; others will prefer to make it verbally, in which case the setting manager writes down the main issues of the complaint using the Complaint Investigation Record and keeps it in the child's file.

For allegations relating to serious harm to a child caused by a member of staff or volunteer procedure 6.2 Allegations against staff, volunteers or agency staff will be followed.

- **Step 3: Acknowledgment:** The Nursery Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 1-2 working days depending on the seriousness of the complaint and outline the next steps in the process. If it's a serious allegation against a staff member, then an immediate disciplinary action will be taken as per our safeguarding policy.
- **Step 4: Investigation:** The Nursery Manager will conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the complaint. This may involve speaking with all relevant parties, reviewing records, and gathering evidence. The manager will also provide time to feedback to the parent within 28 days. A confidential written report of the investigation is kept in the child's file if the complaint relates directly to a child.
- **Step 5: Resolution:** If the parent is still not satisfied, or if the complaint is about the setting manager, the setting manager is asked to forward their complaint verbally or in writing to their line manager.

If the parent is still not satisfied, then he/she is entitled to appeal the outcome verbally or in writing to the setting manager's line manager who will pass the matter on to owners/directors/trustees for further



investigation, who will respond to the parent within a further 14 days. Once the investigation is complete, the Nursery Manager will inform the complainant of the outcome and any actions taken or proposed.

- **Step 8: External Authority:** If the complainant believes that the matter has not been resolved and there has been a breach of the EYFS requirements they are entitled to make a complaint to Ofsted. The manager will assist in any complaint investigation as well as in producing documentation that records the steps that were taken in response to the original complaint.

The setting manager ensures that parents know they can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at any time as follows:

Applications, Regulatory and Contact (ARC) Team, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD or telephone: 0300 123 1231

- **Confidentiality:** All complaints will be handled with strict confidentiality. Information will only be shared with individuals directly involved in the investigation and resolution process.
- **Record Keeping:** All complaints, correspondence, and outcomes will be documented and retained for a minimum of 5 years.

Agencies

- If an individual from another agency wishes to make a formal complaint about a member of staff or any practice of the setting, it should be made in writing to the setting manager.
- The complaint is acknowledged in writing within 10 days of receiving it.
- The setting manager investigates the matter and meets with the individual to discuss the matter further within 28 days of the complaint being received.
- An agreement needs to be reached to resolve the matter.
- If agreement is not reached, the complainant may write to the setting manager's line manager, who acknowledges the complaint within 5 days and reports back within 14 days.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they are entitled to appeal and are referred to the owners/directors/trustees.

Ofsted complaints record

- Legislation requires settings to keep a record of complaints and disclose these to Ofsted at inspection, or if requested by Ofsted at any other time.
 - The record of complaints is a summative record only.
- A record of complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.
- In all cases where a complaint is upheld a review will be undertaken by the owners/directors/trustees to look for ways to improve practice where it is required.

This procedure is displayed on Parent Notice Board.

Further guidance

[Complaint Investigation Record](#) (Alliance Publication)