

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Statement of Intent

As a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance we aim to provide the highest quality education and care for all our children. We aim to offer a welcome to each individual child and family and to provide a warm and caring environment within which children can learn and develop as they play.

We believe children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parents and the community generally and we welcome suggestions on how to improve our group at any time. We anticipate that most serious 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 playgroup to a satisfactory conclusion for all the parties involved.

Methods

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure.

Making Concerns Known

Stage 1

A parent who is uneasy about any aspect of the group's provision should first of all talk over any worries and anxieties with one of the Playgroup Supervisors.

Stage 2

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome within a couple of weeks, or if the problem recurs, the parent should put the concerns or complaint in writing.

Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally at Stage 1 or Stage 2. Please note that, in the event of compromised complaints from one parent about another, the Committee may feel it is fairer to go straight to Stage 4 and ask an independent mediator to act on its behalf (this may be the Pre-School Learning Alliance or Ofsted).

Stage 3

The parent requests a meeting with the playgroup Supervisor and the Chair of the management committee. Both the parents and the Supervisor should have a friend or partner present if required and an agreed written record of the discussion should be made.

Stage 4

If at the Stage 3 meeting, the parent and playgroup cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited to help settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, to listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to clarify the situation.

Staff or volunteers within the Pre-School Learning Alliance will be available to act as mediator if both parties wish it.

The mediator will keep all discussion confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the playgroup personnel 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 investigation, a final meeting between the parent, the playgroup and the Chair of the management committee 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 Registering Authority (Ofsted) 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 National Standards for Day Care are adhered to:

The details for Ofsted can be downloaded from www.ofsted.gov.uk or they can be contacted at:-

Ofsted
NBU, 3rd Floor
Royal Exchange Building
St. Ann's Square
MANCHESTER M2 7LA
Tel: 0845 6404040
E-Mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

If a child appears to be at risk, our playgroup follows the procedures for the Area Child Protection Committee in our local authority (see Child Protection Policy).

In these cases, both the parent and the playgroup are informed and the playgroup Supervisor works with Ofsted and or the Area Child Protection Committee to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint followed by the appropriate action.

Records

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

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Playgroup 19th November 2007