

10.12 MAKING A COMPLAINT

Our preschool believes that children and parents (or other carers) are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our preschool and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the preschool. 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 dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our preschool to a satisfactory conclusion for all parties concerned.

The setting Manager is Karen Blaney. The Deputy Manager is Liz Hotchkiss. If you wish to make a complaint about one of the Managers please speak to the other or to the Chairperson.

Procedure

We are required to keep a written record of any complaint that reaches stage 2 and beyond, and the outcome. This is to be made available to parents, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request. A full procedure is set out in the Preschool Learning Alliance (PLA) publication *Complaint Investigation Record (2012)* which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose (please ask the setting Manager to order this if required from PLA).

Stage 1

- For any parent who is uneasy about an aspect of the preschool's provision they can talk over their worries or anxieties with the Preschool Manager.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- We record the issue, and how it was resolved, in the child's file.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem reoccurs, the parent then puts any concerns or a complaint in writing to the preschool Manager and the chairperson of the committee.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints in the *Complaint Investigation Record*; the form may be completed with the Manager and signed by the parent.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the 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.
- 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 *Complaint Investigation Record*. This is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may request a meeting with the Manager and the Chairperson. The parent may bring another person with them if they wish and the Manager should be supported by the Chairperson or other Committee Member.
- 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 *Complaint Investigation Record*.

Stage 4

- If at the stage 3 meeting the parent and preschool cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited to help 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 which might help it be resolved.
- Staff or volunteers within the Preschool Learning Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. They can hold separate meetings with preschool personnel (leader and chairperson) and the parent, if this is decided to be of help. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice they give.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded their investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the Manager and the chairperson 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 believe this will help make a decision.
- 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

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of The Windmill Preschools registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Safeguarding the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Ofsted can be contacted in writing at:
Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231
By email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk
- These details are displayed on the preschool notice board.

- If a child appears to be at risk, our preschool follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- In these cases, both the parent and preschool are informed and the preschool Manager works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- A record of complaints against our preschool, or the children or the adults working in our preschool is kept for at least 3 years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the *Complaint Investigation Record*, which is available for parents and Ofsted Inspectors on request.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the pre-school held on (date).....

Signed on behalf of the pre-school..... (Chairperson)

Next Policy Review February 2018