

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Statement of intent

Our playgroup believes that children, parents and staff are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes.

We welcome suggestions on how to improve our pre-school and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the pre-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.

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:

Stage 1

Any parent who is uneasy about an aspect of the playgroup's provision talks over his/her worries and anxieties with the playgroup's leader.

Stage 2

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the preschool leader and the Chair of the management committee.

Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally at Stage 1 or at Stage 2.

Stage 3

The parent requests a meeting with the playgroup leader and the Chair of the management committee.

Both the parent and the leader could 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 playgroup 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 Pre-school Learning Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.

The mediator keeps all discussion confidential.

They can hold separate meetings with the pre- school personnel (playgroup leader and chair of the management committee) 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 playgroup leader 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.

Allegations of child abuse against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with the designated member of staff for Child Protection (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

Threatening Behavior

Our Playgroup believes that interactions between staff, parents and children are best conducted in a positive and proactive manner. We believe Playgroup staff have a right to work in a non-threatening environment and are empowered to take action deemed appropriate for their safety and well-being should an aggressive incident occur.

Such action will, in the first instance, be centred on drawing to a halt the interaction and/or using withdrawal strategies deemed necessary for their protection. Any such incident will immediately be reported to the Chairperson and the Group Manager. Staff are provided with emergency contact numbers to request assistance if necessary.

The Chairperson and the Manager will make use of the staged complaints procedure policy (page 34) to resolve the issue.

The aggressor will be required to provide an undertaking that such behaviour will not be repeated in the future. If such an undertaking cannot be achieved or the behaviour is repeated, the Playgroup reserves the right to immediately withdraw the offer of a place to the child/children of the aggressor and any fees already paid will be forfeited.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaint's 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 address and telephone number of our Ofsted regional centre are:

Early Years OFSTED
The National Business Unit
Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Tel 0300 123 1231

If a child appears to be at risk, our playgroup follows the procedures of the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO's) Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.

In these cases, both the parent and playgroup are informed, and the playgroup leader works with our Early Years Safeguarding Advisor; The Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO's) and Ofsted to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint is followed and appropriate action taken.

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.

Policy Re-adopted 9th October 2024 – R Cockbill Chairperson