

Making a complaint

Policy

At Rushwick Pre-School we believe that children, parents and other service users are entitled to courteous, prompt and professional attention to their needs and wishes. We advocate suggestions how we can improve our setting, and will treat concerns about the practice within the setting seriously. We expect that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach; however in the unlikely event this doesn't happen we will follow a set procedure. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of the setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all parties.

Procedure

At Rushwick Pre-School we will keep a record of any complaints reaching Stage 2. This record will be readily available to parents and Ofsted.

Stage 1 - Discussion

- As a first action, any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision discusses his/her concerns with the Pre-School manager.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2 – Written complaint

- If the complaint does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem reoccurs, the parent will put their concern or complaint in writing to both the Pre-School manager and the chair of the management committee.
- Any written complaints are stored in a locked filing cabinet.
- The manager and chair (or other suitable committee representative) will investigate the complaint, and the manager will meet 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, a summary is placed in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 3 – Complaint meeting

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may request a meeting with the manager and the chair (or other suitable committee representative). The parent may have a friend or partner present at this meeting and there should be two Pre-School representatives present (e.g. the manager and chair).
- The discussion is recorded by a method everyone agrees (e.g. signed notes, or an audio recording). All parties present at the meeting will sign a record of any decisions or actions agreed, and receive a copy of this agreement.
- This signed agreement signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved, a summary is placed in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 4 – External mediator attends

- If at the *Stage 3* meeting, the parent and setting cannot reach an 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 power 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 discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (setting manager 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 – Final decision meeting

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the setting manager 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 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 setting'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 123 1231
- These details are displayed on our parent notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the 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 setting and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting 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 Summary Complaints Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

Implemented: June 2013
Updated: November 2017
Signed: