

Complaints Procedure

Forest Kindergarten Sevenoaks

Signed:	Date: May 2017
To be reviewed May 2018	

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Methods:

We operate the following complaints procedure for dealing with complaints against our setting. We will investigate all written complaints, including those relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

We also keep a Complaint Summary Log of all complaints received, action taken and the outcomes. Thus when completing this record we will bear in mind the need for appropriate confidentiality.

Making a complaint:

Stage 1

- Any person, parent or other, who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her worries and anxieties with the setting supervisor or their child's keyworker.
- Most concerns should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the person/parent moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the setting Supervisor and the Manager.
- For persons who are not comfortable with making written complaints, they may ask for help from the setting's supervisor. They may wish to use the complaints summary log record sheet as a basis for this and it should be signed by the setting supervisor and 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 setting Supervisor may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint. All other complaints will be stored in a separate appropriate file.
- The setting will investigate all written complaints and will record the process that was taken to ensure the complaint was fully investigated, eg interviews, reviews of records; who was involved in the investigation without identifying any individuals named in the complaint including staff or any child; any referrals made to an external agency, eg local authority environmental health department or social services.
- The Complaints Summary Log record sheet should be used to summarise this, with appropriate attachments.
- Details of the outcome of the investigation will include, any action(s) identified by the setting; any action set or taken by Ofsted; any action taken by another external agency, where permission to do so has been given; the outcome of the investigation, identifying any areas where it is felt improvements to the setting could be made; if a member of staff was dismissed following the investigation (and under what circumstances) [if this was due to the fact they placed a child at risk of significant harm, they may need to be referred onto the Independent Safeguarding Authority's barred list – advice can be sought from the ISA and Ofsted].
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the setting Supervisor meets with the complainant to discuss the outcome. A separate letter to the person/parent who made the complaint giving more detail may also be issued, if requested or we think it is appropriate.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Log.

Stage 3

- If the person/parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the setting Manager and Deputy Manager Committee. They should have a friend or partner present if required and the Deputy Manager should have the support of the Manager, present.
- 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 Complaints Summary Log.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the person/parent and setting 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. S/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (Deputy Manager and Manager 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 person/parent, the setting Deputy Manager and the Manager 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, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Area Safeguarding Children Committee.
- 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 Early Years Foundation Stage requirements are adhered to.
- The address and telephone number of our Ofsted regional centre are:
Tel. No. 0300 123 1231 (Ofsted Golden number)
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the setting Supervisor works with Ofsted or the Area Safeguarding Children Committee 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 and the outcome.
- This information is recorded in the Complaints Summary Log (using a Complaints Summary Log record sheets) which is available for any parent, staff or committee member of the setting to view.
- We will keep the record of concerns and complaints for at least three years.
- We must provide OFSTED, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.