COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Statement of intent

Our setting believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. 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. **A note on how to complete a complaints procedure and a sample complaints record are available to be seen on the parent trolley.**

Aim

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

Methods

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure. All settings are required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage 2 or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors. A full procedure is set out in the Pre-school Learning Alliance publication 'Complaints Summary Record'. This publication acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first all, his/her worries and anxieties with the setting Supervisor.

- Most complaints 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 parent moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the setting Supervisor 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 above-mentioned publication; the form may be completed with the person in charge 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 Supervisor 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 Supervisor meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.

- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the Supervisor. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the Supervisor should have the support of the Chairperson of the Committee, 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 Record.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent and setting cannot reach agreement, and 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 and 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 (Supervisor and Chairperson) 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, Supervisor and 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 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 National Standards for Day Care are adhered to.

- The address and telephone number of our Ofsted regional centre are;-

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- These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.

- 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 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.

- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaints Summary Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of..... (name of setting)

Held on (date).....

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee/Proprietor.....

Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson etc).....