

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Information and Records

Providers must put in place a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and/or carers, and must keep a written record of any complaints, and their outcome.

10.12 Making a complaint

Policy statement

We believe 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 [with the appropriate member of staff]. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. we aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Procedures

All settings are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, and their 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 Pre-school Learning Alliance publication Complaint Investigation Record (2012) which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of our setting's provision talks over his/her concerns with our manager first of all.
- 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 recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing.
- 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 by our manager and signed by the parent.

- our setting stores all information relating to written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, our 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, our manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- we inform parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of him/her making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with our manager and the chair. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and our manager should have the support of the management team.
- 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, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent cannot reach agreement with us, we invite an external mediator 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 us 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 our staff 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 and our manager and chair, 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.

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Complaint Investigation Record (2015)