



## **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.

A hard copy of this policy has been provided to parents of those children attending The Woodshed. This policy will also be published on our website when we are operational.

### **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/ senior member of staff 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 management / senior staff 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, the 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, the 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 the manager and the director. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and the 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 the manager and director 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), the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Information Commissioner's Office*

- 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 Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at:  
Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD  
Tel: 0300 123 1231
- These details are displayed on The Woodshed notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, we follow the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- In these cases, both the parent and The Woodshed are informed and the manager work with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if you have made a complaint about the way your data is being handled and remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us. For further information about how we handle your data, please refer to the Privacy Notice given to you when you registered your child at The Woodshed. The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk)

*Specific complaint regarding funded hours*

- If a parent is not satisfied with the delivery of our funded offer they will be signposted to [child.care@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:child.care@croydon.gov.uk)
- If parents are not satisfied with the manner in which their complaint has been dealt with or the outcome they can escalate the complaint to Croydon LA  
<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/feedback/complaints-procedure/make>

and invoke the LA's complaint procedure

- If the parent or provider is not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been dealt with by the LA or believes they have acted unreasonably they can make a complaint to the LA ombudsman. Such complaints will only be considered when all prior complaints have been exhausted.

*Records*

- A record of complaints in relation to our setting, or the children or the adults working in our setting, is kept for at least three years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.

	_____
	The Woodshed
Date of policy	_____
	September 2018
Date to be reviewed	_____
	September 2019
Signed on behalf of the provider	_____
	J Scrivens
Name of signatory	_____
	Jack Scrivens
Role of signatory (e.g. director or owner)	_____
	Owner
	_____