



24. Safeguarding Children Policy Complaints Procedure

Aims of Policy

We aim to provide high quality education and care for all our children. We aim to offer a welcome to each individual child and family and provide a warm and caring environment within which all children can learn and develop as they play.

We believe children and parents/guardians are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parents/guardians and the community generally and we welcome suggestions on how to improve our Pre-School at any time. We have a suggestions book attached to the parents' board at the front of Pre-School for anyone to use. 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.

We believe that most complaints are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that it is in the best interests of the Pre-School and parents/guardians that complaints should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way which respects confidentiality.

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

Methods

To achieve this aim, we operate the following complaints procedure. We keep a record of all complaints that reach stage 2 or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her worries and anxieties with the Pre-School Manager, or if the concern relates to the Pre-School Manager, the parent can speak with the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- 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 Pre-School Manager and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
- The Pre-School stores written complaints from parents in a designated complaints file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Pre-School 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 Pre-School Manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Record.

Stage 3

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

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the 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 this might be resolved.
- An external mediator is someone deemed acceptable and trustworthy by both Seer Green Pre-School staff and the parents e.g. a school governor.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. She/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (Pre-School Manager and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees) 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 she/he gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the Pre-School Manager and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision of 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.
- All written complaints need to be dealt with within 28 days.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP)

- 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 Statutory Framework are adhered to.

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

Ofsted, Inspection Support Team, Midlands Regional Office, Building C, Cumberland Place,
Nottingham, NG1 6HJ

Tel: 0300 123 1231

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 BSCP.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the Pre-School Manager works with Ofsted, BSCP or First Response 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 circumstance of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Compliant Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

As with all the policies for Seer Green Pre-School, the Operational Plan should be referred to for the specific details of day to day operations of the Pre-School. In addition, any issues which arise in the course of a child's time with the Pre-School and that are related to a child's health and wellbeing, parent's or staff's concern, or the overall care and safety of our children, staff, parents and equipment will be dealt with in a professional and confidential manner in order to arrive at an appropriate outcome.

This policy was adopted on (date) _____

Signed on behalf of Seer Green Pre-School (Chairperson) _____

This policy was reviewed as indicated below:

2007 created

2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 reviewed and updated as required

July-Nov 2017 reviewed and updated

June-July 2018 reviewed and updated

May 2019 reviewed

June 2020 reviewed and updated

June 2021 reviewed and updated

July 2022 reviewed

June 2023 reviewed

September 2024 reviewed and updated