

## Complaints procedure

### Statement of intent

We believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. It welcomes suggestions on how to improve the pre-school and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the pre-school. It anticipates 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, it has a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.

### Aim

The pre-school aims to bring all concerns about the running of the setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

### Methods

To achieve this, the pre-school operates the following complaints procedure. All pre-schools 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.

### Making a complaint

#### Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the pre-school's provision talks over, first of all, his/her worries and anxieties with the Pre-School Manager.
- 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 the Trustees Committee. The chair can be contacted on [chair@stpaulinuspreschool.co.uk](mailto:chair@stpaulinuspreschool.co.uk) If they prefer not to make the complaint in writing, the Manager or a committee member (whichever the parent prefers) will be available to listen to the complaint and make a written record of it.
- The pre-school stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file and in the summary log of complaints. If the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Pre-School Manager may wish to store the detailed information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint. This is kept for 3 years.

- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Pre-School Manager or Chairperson meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the main points are logged in the complaints summary log.

### 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 committee. The parent should have a friend or partner present if they wish and the Manager should have the support of the Chairperson of the committee present, or another committee member if the Chairperson is unavailable.
- 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 main points are logged in the complaints summary log.

### Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent and pre-school 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 pre-school personnel (Pre-School Manager and Chairperson of the Trustees Committee) 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, the Pre-School Manager and Chairperson of the Trustees Committee 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 pre-school'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.
- Contact Ofsted on the General Helpline: 0300 123 1231 or check their web-site <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us>
- If a child appears to be at risk, the pre-school follows the procedures of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and pre-school are informed and the Pre-School Manager works with Ofsted or the Area Safeguarding Children Committee to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

## Records

- A summary log of complaints against the pre-school and/or the children and/or the adults working in our pre-school 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 log which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

## Staff Complaints

- If staff have a complaint or grievance involving another member of staff they should raise their concern with the Pre-school manager. If their complaint relates to the manager they should raise their concern with the Chair of the Trustees.