

Complaints procedure for Parents and Guardians

We believe that most complaints are made constructively and that they can be resolved at an early stage. It is in the best interest of the parents/guardians and Nursery that all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with fairly.

Our aim is for a real partnership between Sevenoaks Day Nursery and the parents/carers of the children who attend.

To this end, we have an “open house” policy. Parents/carers may drop into the Nursery at any time during opening hours to observe activities or exchange information about their children. This, we hope, develops a trust that the Nursery has nothing to hide in its practice.

We encourage new parents to meet up with “established” parents, to help them feel comfortable and at ease with the Nursery environment and its routines.

If a parent/guardian should wish to have a formal discussion with the staff or Manager they are welcome to telephone or leave a note for the Manager so that a convenient meeting can be arranged for all the parties concerned.

If a parent/guardian wishes to discuss or complain about any Nursery matters, we hope that they would feel able to talk to the room staff or supervisor in the first instance. If not, or, if they are unhappy with the outcome of an informal discussion, then we have a set procedure that will be followed.

Procedures

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the Nursery's provision discusses their concerns with the Manager.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

- If there is not a satisfactory outcome at Stage 1, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the Manager. Where the complaint is in relation to the Manager, it should be put in writing to the Chair of the Management Committee.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, the Nursery has a template form for recording complaints and the form may be completed with the Manager and signed by the parent. If the complaint is about the Manager, a member of the Management Committee will assist the parent to fill out and sign the template.
- The Manager or Chair of the Management Committee will fully investigate the details of the complaint. This will involve speaking to the all of the members of staff

involved and, if thought necessary, asking for written reports from each of them about any incident/complaint/routines, etc, concerned.

- Where the investigation is conducted by the Chair (or other members) of the Management Committee, it is possible that there may be email correspondence between the complainant and the Management Committee member's private email account. In order to ensure that copies of all such correspondence are retained by the Nursery, all such emails will be copied to the Nursery's administrative email account.
- The Nursery stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint requires a more 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, Manager or Chair of the Management Committee meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in by the Nursery in its log in addition to the detailed information stored in the child's personal file.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the Manager and/or the Management committee. The parent may have a friend or partner present and the Manager should have the support of the Chair of the Management Committee, or a Trustee, 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 an agreed action has been taken and that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Nursery's log, in addition to the other information stored in the child's personal file.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and Nursery 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.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the Nursery personnel, the Manager and the Management 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 Manager and the Chair of the Management 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, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the Nursery'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.
- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is available on Ofsted's website.
- These details are also displayed on the Nursery's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, the Nursery follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board of the local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and the Nursery are informed and the Nursery Manager works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- As detailed above in this policy, a written record of all complaints received by the Nursery, and their outcome, is kept by the Nursery, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- These written records are stored together with the child's personal files for as long as regulations require that the Nursery maintain the child's personal files.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded and available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

This policy was adopted by the Trustees

Date

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

Role of signatory – Chairman of Trustees