

Complaints Procedure

Statement of intent

Little Acorns believes 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 school and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the school. 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.

Aim

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

Methods

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure.

How to complain

Stage 1

- Any parent who is uneasy about an aspect of the school's provision talks over, first, his/her worries and anxieties with Val Duffy (Bracknell) or Michelle Tuddenham (Windsor).

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 Val Duffy or Michelle Tuddenham.
- Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally at Stage 1 or at Stage 2.

Stage 3

- The parent requests a meeting with Val Duffy and Michelle Tuddenham. Both the parent and the school should have a friend or partner present if required. An agreed written record of the discussion is made. All the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent and 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 school personnel 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, within 28 days, a final meeting between the parent, the school leader, and the owner/chair of the management. 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 presents 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 Child Protection Committee.

Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaint's procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of our registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the National Standards for Day Care are adhered to.

The address and telephone number of our Ofsted regional centre are:
Ofsted Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester. M1 2WD
Telephone: 0300 123 1231

These details are displayed on our pre-school's notice board.

If a child appears to be at risk, our pre-school follows the procedures of the Area Child Protection Committee in our local authority.

In these cases, both the parent and pre-school are informed, and the pre-school leader works with Ofsted or the Local safeguarding children's board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint followed by appropriate action.

Records

A record of complaints against our 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 for at least three years.