**Safeguarding Children**

**Complaints Procedure**

**Policy statement**

Our pre-school believes that children and parents/carers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our pre-school and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the pre-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 that desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.

**EYFS key themes and commitments**

**Aim**

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

**Methods**

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure.

All pre-schools are required to keep a ‘summary log’ of all complaint that reach stage two or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors.

**How to Complain**

**Stage 1**

* Any parent who is uneasy about an aspect of the pre-school’s provision talks over, first of all, his/her worries and anxieties with their child’s key person, the pre-school Manager/owner (Hayley Coombes) or the deputy/owner (Alice Penfold).
* 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 reoccurs, the parent moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaints in writing to the pre-school Management (Hayley Coombes and Alice Penfold)
* The pre-school stores written complaints from parents in a complaints file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Pre-school will store all information relating to the investigation in the relevant child’s file.
* 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 File.

Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally at Stage 1 or at Stage2.

**Stage 3**

* If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the Management of the pre-school. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required. An agreed written record of the discussion is made and signed by all parties present, and each person has a copy for their records.
* 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 File.

**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.
* The mediator keeps all discussion confidential. She/he can hold separate meetings with the pre-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 she/he gives.

**Stage 5**

* When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the pre-school Management 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 of copy for their files. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

**The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (OFSTED) and 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 our registration requirements, it is essential to involve OFSTED as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.

The address and telephone number of OFSTED are: **03001231231 or 0300 123 4666**

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

The details regarding OFSTED are displayed on our 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 manager and owner works with OFSTED or the Area Child Protection Committee to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint followed by appropriate action.

**Records**

All records of complaints against our pre-school and/or the children and/or the adults working in our pre-school are kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Summary Complaints Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

This policy was adopted on ................................................................

Date to be reviewed ...................................................................

Signed (All Staff) ..........................................................................................................................

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