10 Working in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies procedures

**10.2 Complaints procedure for parents/carers and service users and staff**

**Policy statement**

We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and we will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. If the initial contact does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures set out below for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all the parties involved.

There is a fair way of dealing with issues as they arise in an informal way, but parent/carers may wish to exercise their right to make a formal complaint. They are informed of the procedure to do this and complaints are responded to in a timely way. The same procedures apply to agencies who may have a grievance or complaint. The same procedure applies to staff members who have a grievance or complaint.

# Parents

# If a parent/carer is unhappy about any aspect of their child’s care or how he/she feels he/she has been treated, this should be discussed with the child’s key worker. The key worker will listen to the parent and acknowledge what he/she is unhappy about. The key worker will offer an explanation and an apology if appropriate. The issue and how it was resolved is recorded in the child’s file and Complaint Investigation Record. The recording will also make clear whether the issue being raised relates to a concern about quality of the service or practice, or a complaint. For allegations relating to serious harm to a child caused by a member of staff or volunteer procedure 6.2 Allegations against staff, volunteers or agency staff will be followed.

* If the parent/carer is not happy with the key worker’s response or wishes to complain about the key worker or any other member of staff, he/she will be directed to the room seniors. This can be done verbally or in writing. If the parent/carer is not happy with the room seniors response they will be directed to the manager. Some parents/carers will want to make a written complaint; others will prefer to make it verbally, in which case the manager writes down the main issues of the complaint using the Complaint Investigation Record and keeps it in the child’s file.
* The manager will investigate the complaint and provide time to feedback to the parent/carer within 28 days. A confidential written report of the investigation is kept in the child’s file if the complaint relates directly to a child.
* If the parent/carer is still not satisfied, or if the complaint is about the manager, they will be directed to a member of the management committee.
* The parent/carer should put details of their complaint in writing and a member of the management committee (Trustee) will be appointed to act as a mediator to help resolve 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 an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice he/she gives. Any verbal discussions must be followed up via email and both parties must be given clear times scales. The Trustee will aim for the procedure to be concluded and the complaint to be resolved within 28 days. An agreed written record of the discussions is made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All parties sign the record and receive a copy of it. The signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded and the complaint is resolved. The summative points are logged in the Complaints Record form.
* If the parent/carer is still not satisfied, they should put their complaint in writing to the Chair of the management committee or they can request a meeting with the Chair and the manager. The Chair of the management committee will investigate the complaint.
* When the Chair has concluded their investigations, a final meeting between the parent/carer and the manager and any involved committee is held. The purpose of the meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to resolve the complaint. The Chair’s advice is used to reach this conclusion. The Chair 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. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.
* If the parent/carer believes that the matter has not been resolved and there has been a breach of the EYFS requirements they are entitled to make a complaint to Ofsted. The manager will assist in any complaint investigation as well as in producing documentation that records the steps that were taken in response to the original complaint.
* The manager ensures that parents/carers know they can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at any time as follows**:**

Applications, Regulatory and Contact (ARC) Team, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD or telephone: 0300 123 1231

# Agencies

* If an individual from another agency wishes to make a formal complaint about a member of staff or any practice of the setting, it should be made in writing to the setting manager.
* The complaint is acknowledged in writing within 10 days of receiving it.
* The setting manager investigates the matter and meets with the individual to discuss the matter further within 28 days of the complaint being received.
* An agreement needs to be reached to resolve the matter.
* If agreement is not reached, the complainant may write to the setting manager’s line manager, who acknowledges the complaint within 5 days and reports back within 14 days.
* If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they are entitled to appeal and are referred to the owners/directors/trustees.

**Ofsted complaints record**

* Legislation requires settings to keep a record of complaints and disclose these to Ofsted at inspection, or if requested by Ofsted at any other time.
* The record of complaints is a summative record only.

A record of complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.

* In all cases where a complaint is upheld a review will be undertaken by the owners/directors/trustees to look for ways to improve practice where it is required.

This procedure is displayed on Parent Notice Board.

**Further guidance**

[Complaint Investigation Record](https://portal.eyalliance.org.uk/Shop#!prod/660cb3b8-585a-eb11-a812-00224840f4a7/curr/GBP) (Early Years Alliance 2021)

**Complaints procedure for staff**

* If a staff member wishes to make a complaint, they can do so verbally with the manager.
* If the staff member does not feel satisfied with the verbal discussion with the manager, they should put their complaint in writing to a member of management committee (Trustee). A Trustee will be appointed to act as a mediator to help resolve 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 an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice he/she gives. Any verbal discussions must be followed up via email and both parties must be given clear times scales. An outcome will be provided within 28 days. An agreed written record of the discussions is made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All parties sign the record and receive a copy of it. The signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded and the complaint is resolved. The summative points are logged in the Complaints Record form.
* If the staff member is still not satisfied, they should put their complaint in writing to the Chair of the management committee or they can request a meeting with the Chair and the manager. The Chair of the management committee will investigate the complaint.
* When the Chair has concluded their investigations, a final meeting between the staff member and the manager and any involved committee is held. The purpose of the meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to resolve the complaint. The Chair’s advice is used to reach this conclusion. The Chair 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. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.