**Tring Stepping Stones Preschool**

**Complaints procedure for parents and service users**

There is a fair way of dealing with issues as they arise in an informal way, but parents 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.

# Parents

# If a parent 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 person or the Preschool leader. Tring Stepping Stones will listen to the parent and acknowledge what he/she is unhappy about. We 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.

* If the complaint is about the Preschool leader, the parent should speak to the chair person.
* Some parents will want to make a written complaint; others will prefer to make it verbally; in which case the preschool leader will write down the main issues of the complaint using the Complaint Investigation Record and keep it in the child’s file.
* The Preschool leader and chairperson will investigate the complaint and provide time to feedback to the parent 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 is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the pre-school leader and the chair of the management committee. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the leader should have the support of the chairperson of the management committee 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 the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.
* If at the stage three meeting the parent and setting 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 discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (setting leader and chair of 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.
* When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the pre-school leader 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.
* If the complainant 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 Preschool leader 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 setting manager ensures that parents 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.

**Further guidance**

Complaint Investigation Record (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2015)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Tring Stepping Stones Pre-School

Held on :

Date to be reviewed: **October 2024**

Signed on behalf of the management committee:

Name of signatory:

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Staff Name  | Staff signature  | Date  |
| Lucy Brittain |  |  |
| Nicola Poulton |  |  |
| Nicola Reynolds |  |  |
| Kim Smith |  |  |
| Jo Davis |  |  |
|  |  |  |

October 2023 – No changes