

7. Complaints Policy

7.1 Statement of intent

Our pre-school 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 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 the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.

7.2 Aim

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our pre-school to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. We would acknowledge the complaint either verbally or in writing within one week of receiving it. We would hope all issues would be resolved quickly. If outside mediators need to be involved we aim to resolve any concerns within 28 days from the date the complaint was made.

7.3 Records

All complaints received will be recorded in writing and detailed as follows:

- Date of complaint
- Source of complaint
- Which policy it relates to
- Details of the complaint
- How it will be dealt with
- Actions and outcomes
- Information shared with parents
- Name of recorder
- Outcome notified to parent within 28 days
- Date completed
- Name, position and signature of person dealing with complaint

7.4 Confidentiality

When complaints records are completed in writing, depending on the nature of complaint, it might be necessary to share information recorded with other parents, children, staff, Chairperson, Committee members, outside agencies or Ofsted. To maintain confidentiality the person making the complaint or any persons (adults and children) that relate to the complaint will not be named. All details associated with the complaint and individuals will be recorded in the following format e.g. child (a), parent (b), staff (c).

Policy 8. Confidentiality

7.5 Making A Complaint

To make a complaint you will need to follow the steps below:

Step 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 the Manager. The Manager will record in writing details of the complaint made in the Complaints Record. Copies of the complaint record will be issued to the parent for their information. We would hope most issues will be resolved quickly through the initial discussion however if the matter is still un-resolved move to step 2 of the complaints procedure.

Step 2 - Parents must put their concerns or complaint in writing to the Manager and the Chair Person of the management committee. Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally at step 1 or step 2. Copies of the complaint record will be issued to the parent for their information. If the matter is still un-resolved move to step 3 of the complaints procedure.

Step 3 - The parent requests a meeting with the Manager and the Chairperson of the management committee. Both the parent and the Manager should have a friend or partner present if required. An agreed written record of the discussion is made. All of the parties present at the meeting receive a copy of the record.

This record identifies that the procedure has been:

- Concluded.
- An investigation may be needed into the complaint.
- An agreement to put an action plan in place to help resolve the matter has been reached.

Where a complaint has been concluded the Chairperson would acknowledge in writing to the parent. An action plan would be agreed for a complaint which needs investigating and also if an agreement has been made to put one into place. A copy would be made available for the parent. If the matter is still un-resolved move to step 4 of the complaints procedure.

Step 4 - If at the step 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. 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 pre-school personnel (Manager or and Chairperson of the management committee) and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. An agreed written complaint record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he gives is recorded in writing. All of the parties present at the meeting receive a copy of the record for their information.

Step 5 - When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the Manager and the Chairperson 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.

7.6 The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Boards

Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaint 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 are adhered to. Walton Under Fives Pre-School must provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

The address and telephone number of our Ofsted regional centre are:

**Ofsted Complaints National Business Unit,
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester, M1 2WD**

**Helpline: 0300 123 1231
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents**

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

The Pre-School will report any complaint to:
The Childcare Sufficiency Manager, Strategic Planning
Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY

If a child appears to be at risk, our pre-school follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Board in our local authority. In these cases, both the parent and pre-school are informed and the Manager works with the Local Safeguarding Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint followed by appropriate action.

Links to other policies, legislation and forms:-

- Policy 8. Confidentiality
- Policy 9. Data Protection
- Statutory Framework for Early Years foundation stage 2017

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Walton Under Fives Pre-School held in January 2020. This policy was reviewed and updated during a committee meeting in April 2021

Signed (Pre School Leader) Date

Signed (Committee Chair) Date