

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Information and Records

Making a complaint

Policy statement

We are committed to providing high-quality early education and care. Children and families have the right to expect courtesy, respect and prompt attention to their needs. We welcome feedback and use it to improve our provision.

Most concerns can be resolved quickly through informal discussion with the appropriate member of staff. However, if concerns cannot be resolved informally, or if the matter is more serious, we follow this structured complaints procedure.

Our aim is to ensure that all concerns are listened to, investigated fairly, and concluded with a clear record of outcomes for all parties involved. We follow the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2024 and maintain a written log of all complaints that reach Stage 2 or above.

General Principles

- Complaints are handled professionally, fairly and consistently.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of progress and outcomes within statutory timescales.
- All complaint records are kept for at least three years and are available to Ofsted on request.
- Information is processed in line with UK GDPR and our Privacy Notice.
- Where a complaint relates to safeguarding, we follow Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) procedures and involve Ofsted where required.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

1. Parents are encouraged to raise any concern promptly with the Manager (or most appropriate senior staff member).
2. Most issues can be resolved through discussion at this stage.
3. Staff record:
 - the nature of the concern;

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- steps taken to resolve it;
- the outcome.

This is noted in the child's record and/or communication log as appropriate.

If the concern cannot be resolved informally, or if the parent wishes to proceed formally, the complaint moves to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal Written Complaint

1. Parents set out their complaint in writing. If assistance is needed, the Manager can document the complaint on the parent's behalf, and the parent signs to confirm accuracy.
2. The Manager acknowledges the complaint and begins an investigation, which may involve reviewing records, speaking with staff, or gathering further evidence.
3. Information relating to the investigation is stored securely, either in the child's file or, if extensive, in a separate complaint file.
4. The Manager meets with the parent to discuss outcomes and any actions required.
5. Parents receive a written response within 28 days of making the complaint (as required by Ofsted).
6. When resolved at this stage, a summary is entered into the Complaints Record, available to Ofsted inspectors and parents on request.

If the parent remains dissatisfied, the complaint moves to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Review Meeting

1. The parent may request a meeting with the Manager and/or senior leadership.
2. Parents may bring a partner, friend, or representative. The Manager may be supported by another senior member of staff.
3. An agreed written record of the discussion, actions and decisions is produced and signed by all parties, who each receive a copy.
4. This signed record confirms that Stage 3 has concluded.
5. A summary is added to the Complaints Record.

If the parent is still not satisfied, Stage 4 may be offered.

Stage 4: External Mediation (Optional)

1. If both parties agree, an independent mediator may be used to help resolve the complaint.
2. The mediator:

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- listens to both sides;
- helps clarify issues;
- suggests ways forward.

The mediator has no legal authority, but helps promote a fair resolution.

3. Meetings may be joint or separate.

4. The mediator keeps a confidential written record of meetings and any advice given.

If required, a final decision meeting is held (Stage 5).

Stage 5: Final Decision Meeting

1. The Manager and parent meet to agree the final outcome, with the mediator present if all parties feel this will help.
2. A written record of the meeting and agreed actions is produced and signed by everyone present.
3. This signed record confirms that the internal complaints procedure has been fully concluded.

Parents may contact Ofsted at any stage of the process.

Contacting Ofsted

Parents can contact Ofsted directly at any time, including if they believe:

- the setting is failing to meet EYFS requirements;
- a child may not be safe;
- the setting is not following its policies;
- the complaint has not been handled appropriately.

Ofsted Contact Details (2025):

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate,

Store Street,

Manchester, M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Details are displayed on our notice board and provided in our welcome information.

When Ofsted notifies us about a complaint, we cooperate fully and take any required action.

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Safeguarding Concerns

If at any point a complaint suggests that a child may be at risk of harm, we immediately follow:

- Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) procedures
- our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- statutory duties under Working Together 2023/24

We may need to contact:

- Bromley Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Ofsted

Parents will be informed unless doing so places a child at further risk.

Data Protection and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

If a complaint relates to the way we handle personal data and the parent is unhappy with our response, they may contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

ICO details are provided in our Privacy Notice and are available at: ico.org.uk

Records

- All complaints reaching Stage 2 or above are recorded in the Complaints Record, including the date, nature of the complaint, investigation, actions taken and outcome.
- Records are kept for a minimum of three years (longer if required for safeguarding).
- The Complaints Record is available to parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.