

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 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework effective 1 September 2026 and current Ofsted requirements. A written record is maintained of formal complaints, the investigation outcome and any action taken.

General Principles

This policy has been reviewed against the EYFS framework effective 1 September 2026, current Ofsted childcare complaints/enforcement guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and current Bromley safeguarding arrangements.

- 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 current Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP), London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. A complaint, a concern about quality of care or practice, and an allegation against a person who works with children are treated as distinct matters and referred through the correct route without delay.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

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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;
 - steps taken to resolve it;
 - A complaint may be made verbally, in writing or with reasonable assistance from the setting. We make reasonable adjustments for disability, communication, literacy or language needs. A family will not be treated less favourably because they have raised a concern or complaint.
 - Where the complaint concerns the Manager, it is referred to the proprietor/committee or other appropriate senior person so that it can be considered impartially. Safeguarding allegations follow the separate safeguarding/LADO route.
 - 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. The setting provides the complainant with the findings of the investigation and any resulting action as soon as reasonably possible and within 28 days of the complaint being made. The response is provided in writing where requested.
6. A written record of the complaint, investigation outcome and action taken is kept and made available to Ofsted on request. Information disclosed to parents is handled lawfully and does not disclose confidential information about another child, family or member of staff.

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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:
 - 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 about concerns regarding registered childcare. Ofsted normally expects concerns to be raised with the provider first and its role is to consider whether

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registration requirements are being met; it does not resolve private disputes between parents and providers.

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 (September 2026):

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 123 4666 (concerns or complaints about childcare)

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

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

When Ofsted contacts us about a concern or complaint, we cooperate fully, provide information lawfully and promptly, and take any required action. Ofsted may inspect, undertake regulatory activity, require action or work with other agencies where appropriate.

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 to Safeguard Children 2026

We may need to contact:

- Bromley Children and Families Hub (C&F Hub): 020 8461 7373 / 7379 (Mon-Fri 8:30am-5pm), candfhub@bromley.gov.uk; out of hours 0300 303 8671; call 999 if a child is in immediate danger.
- **Complaints or allegations about adults working with children**
- Where information indicates that a member of staff, volunteer, student or other adult working with children may have harmed a child, committed an offence against or related to a child, posed a risk of harm, or may be unsuitable to work with children, this is not

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investigated through the ordinary complaints stages. The Manager/DSL follows the setting's allegations procedure and seeks Bromley LADO advice/referral immediately via the Children, Young People and Families Hub Portal. Staff must not conduct their own investigation, ask leading questions, promise confidentiality or discuss the allegation with the accused before advice is obtained.

- 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, we first address it through the setting's data-protection complaints process and Privacy Notice. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may raise the matter with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Current ICO contact information is provided in our Privacy Notice and through the Information Commissioner's Office.

Records

- All formal complaints are recorded, including the date, nature of the complaint, investigation, findings, actions taken and outcome. Records are stored securely with access limited to those who need to know.
- Complaint records are retained for at least three years where the setting is subject to the Childcare Register requirement, and longer where required by safeguarding, legal, insurance or the setting's retention schedule.
- Complaint records are made available to Ofsted on request. Parents may be provided with appropriate information about complaints in accordance with the EYFS, registration requirements, confidentiality and data-protection law.

Legal framework and current guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers - effective 1 September 2026
- Childcare Act 2006 and applicable Childcare Register requirements
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

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- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership and London Safeguarding Children Procedures
- Ofsted early years and childcare enforcement/complaints guidance - September 2026