Concerns and Complaints Policy

Policy Aim

All children and parents can expect careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve the setting and will give timely and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. Most concerns will be resolved quickly with an informal approach. If this does not achieve a satisfactory conclusion for all parties involved the five-stage procedure, set out below, will be followed.

Procedures

The setting is required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request. Meetings may take place in person or online (e.g. Zoom) as appropriate.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over their concerns with the manager/deputy.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- A record of the issue, and how it was resolved, is kept on file.
- If the complaint is made outside of term time it should be sent to the Committee.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem reoccurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, the manager/deputy will assist with documenting the concerns or complaint and this must be signed by the parents.
- Complaints will be acknowledged within 7 working days.
- The setting stores all information relating to written complaints from parents in the Complaints file.
- Parents are informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of receipt of the written complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the main points in the Complaints file, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- In the event that the parents are not satisfied with the outcome, they can request a meeting in person with the manager and the Committee at the address below or email debs@strattonpreschool.co.uk The parent may have a friend or partner present.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made, as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All 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, we log the main points in the Complaint File.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent cannot reach agreement with us, we invite an external mediator 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 us to define the problem, review the action(s) so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- Trustees of the setting or a representative from the Local Authority Early Years Services are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. They can hold separate meetings with staff 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 they give.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded their investigations, a final meeting between the parent, manager and 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.

The role of Ofsted and the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP)

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone, email or in writing at:
    - Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
    - enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

- Tel: 0300 123 1231

- Both the parent and the setting are informed, and the manager will work with Ofsted or the GSCP to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- If a child appears to be at risk, we follow our safeguarding policy and the procedures of the GSCP.

Records

- A record of complaints in relation to the setting, children or adults working in the setting, is kept for at least three years or the next Ofsted inspection (whichever is the longer). This includes the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaints File, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.

*All references to 'parents' in this policy should be understood as parents, carers, legal guardians or authorised adults as applicable. 'Child' refers to child or children as applicable.