

COMPLAINTS POLICY / PROCEDURE

Eaton Mill Nursery is committed to providing a safe, stimulating, consistent and accessible service to children and their parents/carers. We always aim to provide high quality services for everyone, but accept that sometimes things do not always go to plan. In such circumstances, we want to know so that we can put them right and learn from our mistakes.

This policy constitutes the Setting's formal Complaints Procedure.

Under normal circumstances, the Managers will be responsible for managing complaints. If a complaint is made against the Manager/s, the Registered Person will determine whether they conduct the investigation personally, delegate it to the Chief Executive Officer and/or commission an external investigator. All complaints made to staff will be recorded in detail on the Parent/Carer Feedback Form.

Stage One

If a parent/carer has a complaint about some aspect of the Setting's activity, or about the conduct of an individual member of staff, it will often be possible to resolve the problem by simply speaking to the individual concerned and/or to the relevant Manager. The Setting is committed to open and regular dialogue with parents/carers and the Setting welcomes all comments on its services, regardless of whether they are positive or negative.

In the first instance, parents/carers are encouraged to speak directly to the relevant member of staff, if deemed appropriate. If not, the relevant Manager should be approached and they will try to resolve the problem. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found, then Stage Two of the procedure will formally come into operation.

Stage Two

If informal discussions of a complaint or problem have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, parents/carers should detail their complaint in writing to the Manager. Relevant names, dates, evidence and any other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included.

The Setting will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible – within three working days at least – and fully investigate the matter within 28 working days. The Manager will be responsible for sending them a full and formal response to the complaint.

If the Manager has good reason to believe that the situation has child protection implications, they should inform Milton Keynes Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) according to the procedure set out in the Child Protection Policy. If any party involved in the complaint has good reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed, then they will contact the police.

The formal response to the complaint from the Setting will be sent to the parent/carer concerned and copied to all relevant members of staff if appropriate. The response will include recommendations for dealing with the complaint and for any amendments to the Setting's policies or procedures emerging from the investigation.

The Manager will arrange a time to meet the parent/carer concerned and any other relevant individuals, such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint and the Setting's response to it. The Manager will judge if it is best for all parties to meet together or if individual meetings are more appropriate.

If at the conclusion of this process parents/carers remain dissatisfied with the response they have received, the original complaint along with the Setting's response will be passed to the Registered Person who will adjudicate the case.

The Registered Person will communicate a detailed response, including any actions to be taken, to both the Manager and the parents/carers concerned within 28 working days.

Definitions

A "concern" can be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A "complaint" can be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'. Complaints can be resolved formally, through this procedure, or informally dependent on the Complainant's choice.

Any concern or complaint will be taken seriously, whether formally or informally, and the appropriate procedures will be implemented.

A "grievance" is an issue raised by a member of staff where they feel the Setting has not implemented a policy or process fairly or properly. Any complaints by an employee about their employment will be dealt with in line with the Nursery's Grievance Policy.

For the purpose of this Policy, concerns will be classed and addressed as complaints.

For the purpose of this Policy, "unreasonable complaints" include:

- Vexatious complaints:
 - Are obsessive, combative, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious.
 - Insist upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason.
 - Insist upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner.
 - Are designed to cause disruption or annoyance.
 - Demand for redress which lacks any serious purpose or value.
- Serial or persistent complaints:
 - Are duplicated, sent by the same Complainant once the initial complaint has been closed.

Serial or persistent complaints will only be marked as 'serial' once the Complainant has completed the complaints procedure. It is the complaint that will be marked as 'serial' meaning the Complainant can complain about a separate issue if necessary.

For the purpose of this Policy, "duplicate complaints" are identical complaints received from a Complainant's spouse, partner, grandparent or child. These complaints will not be addressed again, the individual making the second complaint will be informed that the complaint has been dealt with on a local level and if they are dissatisfied with the result, they can appeal to the Ofsted.

Any new details provided by a Complainant's spouse, partner, grandparent or child, will be investigated and dealt with in line with the Complaints Procedure.

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure, the setting wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review the Setting's policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.
- dismiss the complaint in its entirety
- uphold part of the complaint
- determine that the complaint is malicious and/or vexatious in manner and decide on appropriate action

Complaint Withdrawal

If the Complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Making a Complaint to Ofsted

Any parent/carer can, at any time, submit a complaint to Ofsted about any aspect of registered childcare provision. Ofsted will consider and investigate all complaints received. The contact number for Ofsted is 0300 123 4666.