



Starlings Preschool Making a complaint policy

Policy statement

Starlings 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 setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. 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. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Procedures

All settings are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two or above, and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request. A full procedure is set out in the Pre-school Learning Alliance publication *Summary Complaints Record (2012)* which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the settings provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the Manger.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, 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, there is a template form for recording complaints in the above-mentioned publication; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Manager may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record, which is made available to Ofsted on request
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Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the Manager and the chairperson of the committee. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the Manager should have the support of the chairperson of the

committee, present.

- An agreed written record of the discussion is made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the 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, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and setting cannot reach agreement with us, 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 discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with our 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 s/he gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the Manager and the chairperson of the 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 the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Information Commissioner's Office

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the settings 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.
- The number to call Ofsted by telephone or in writing to:
 - Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
Telephone: 0300 123 1231
- These details are displayed on our settings notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the setting leader works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) can be contacted if you have made a complaint about the way your data is being handled and remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us. For further information about how we handle your data please refer to the Privacy Notice given to you when you registered your child at our setting. The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioners Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or ico.org.uk

Records

- A record of complaints in relation to our setting, or the children or the adults working in our setting is kept for at least 3 years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in our Complaints Investigation Record , which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Complaint Investigation Record (2015)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Starlings Pre-school (name of provider)
Held on _____ (date)
Date to be reviewed _____ (date)
Signed on behalf of the provider _____
Name of signatory _____
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) _____