



## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

We aim to provide the highest quality education and care for all our children. We welcome each child and their family providing a warm and caring environment within which all children can learn and develop as they play.

We believe children and parents are entitled to expect a prompt, courtesy, response to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work with parents and the community and we welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting at any time.

### **Making concerns known**

A parent who is uneasy about any aspect of the settings provision should first of all talk over any worries and anxieties with the child's keyperson.

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome within 2 weeks, or if the problem recurs, the parent should put the concerns or complaint in writing and request a meeting with the Manager and the Chair of the Committee. An agreed written record of the discussion should be made and signed by those present.

Issues about the way in which funding entitlement is offered should also be addressed to the Manager initially. The local authority will intervene where the complaint refers to Early Education and the funding entitlement offer is not compliant with legislation, other published statutory guidance and government advice. The local authority will not intervene where parents choose to purchase additional hours of provision or additional services providing this does not affect the parent's ability to take up their child's funded place.

Most complaints should be resolved informally or at this initial stage.

If the matter is still not resolved to the parent's satisfaction, the parent should again contact the Chair.

If parent and setting cannot reach agreement, it might be helpful to invite an external mediator, one who is acceptable to both parties, to listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to clarify the situation. Staff or volunteers within the Pre-school Learning Alliance will be available to act as mediators if either party wishes it.

The mediator will help define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.

The mediator will keep all discussion confidential. They will meet the setting if requested and will keep and agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice they have given.

### **The role of the registering authority**

In some circumstances, it will be necessary to bring in the local authority registration and inspection unit, who have a duty to ensure laid down requirements are adhered to and with whom the Pre-School Learning Alliance works in partnership to encourage high standards. The registering authority would be involved if a child appeared to be at risk or where there seemed to be a possible breach of registration requirements (see Safeguarding policy.) In these cases both parent and pre-school would be informed and the Fieldworker would work with the Social Services Department and / or Ofsted to ensure a proper

investigation if the complaint followed by appropriate action.

Parents should contact Norfolk Children's Services in the first instance, but do have the option if they prefer to contact Ofsted directly. If Ofsted is contacted before the local authority, the Pre-school Chair/Manager should advise Norfolk Children Services immediately. If the safety of the child is at risk or the Pre-School has been accused of breaching its registration the matter must be referred to Ofsted and the local authority.

The number of OFSTED is also clearly displayed on the notice board if parents wish to make a direct complaint. **Tel No 0300 123 4666**

We believe that most complains are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that it is in the best interest of the Pre-school and parents that complaints should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way which respects confidentiality.

This policy is on the parent's information board and staff ensure parents are aware of where this is when visiting. It is also available on our website.

Where parents/ carers are not satisfied that their child is receiving the free entitlement in the correct way (as set out in our funding agreement with the Local Authority and in the Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for Local Authorities) a complaint can be submitted directly to the current Chair of the Management Committee.