



Willow Tree Pre-School
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Registered Charity No (1130575)

Complaints Procedure for Parents and Service Users (refer to Alliance Publication Complaints Summary record book)

Links to Early Years Foundation Stage

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Staff: Child ratios

Safety and suitability of premises environment and equipment

Equal opportunities

Information and records

Complaints Procedures

Policy statement

We believe 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 with 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 parties involved.

Procedures

All settings are 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. A full procedure is set out in the Pre-school Learning Alliance publication Complaint Investigation Record (2012) which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

There are 5 stages to making a complaint

Stage 1

Any parent/Carer who has a concern about an aspect of our setting's provision talks over his/her concerns with the child's key worker or our manager firstly. The key person will offer an explanation and an apology if appropriate. Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage. We record the issue, and how it was resolved, in the child's file.

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 Complaint Investigation Record; the form may be completed by the manager and signed by the parent/Carer. Our setting stores all information relating to 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. We inform parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of him/her making the complaint. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation or wishes to make a complaint about the manager he or she requests a meeting with our Committee Chair. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and our Committee Chair should have the support of the management team. 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, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record.

Stage 4

If at the stage three 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 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. She/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, our manager and Committee Chair 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.

Appeals

If the parent is still not satisfied, then he/ she is entitled to appeal the outcome verbally or in writing to the settings' line manager who will pass the matter on to the Children's Services Director for further investigation. The Children's Services Director will investigate and respond to the parent within a further 14 days.

In all cases where a complaint is upheld a review will be undertaken by senior managers to look for ways to improve practice where it is required.

Agencies

If an individual from another agency wishes to make a formal complaint about a member of staff or any practice of the setting, it should be made in writing to the manager.

- The complaint is acknowledged in writing within 10 days of receiving it
- The manager investigates the matter and meets with the individual to discuss the matter further. This takes place within 28 days of the complaint being received. An agreement needs to be reached to resolve the matter.
- If agreement is not reached, the complainant may write to the manager's line manager, who acknowledges the complaint within 5 days and reports back within 14 days.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they are entitled to appeal and are referred to the Children's Services Director (as above)
- A complaint from an agency is recorded in a complaints file held separately, but the result of the investigation is recorded in the Complaints Summary Record book.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

Parents/Carers or Agencies 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 or in writing at:

Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

These details are displayed on our notice board.

If a child appears to be at risk, we follow the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

In these cases, both the parent and our setting are informed and our manager will work with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

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 three years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

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

Complaints regarding Early Education Childcare Funding

Complaints about West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) can be made via the [‘Compliments, comments and complaints’ Procedure: Comments, compliments and complaints](#)

If a parent/carer or Provider is not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been dealt with by WNC or believes WNC has acted unreasonably, they can make a complaint through the WNC Ombudsman. Such complaints will only be considered when the local complaints procedures have been exhausted. Contact details and information on how to complain can be found at [The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman](#)

Complaints regarding the handling of funding entitlement by the Pre-School will be managed in accordance with the above complaints procedure and appeal process.

Signed on behalf of the provider

Willow Tre Pre-School

Name and date of signatory

Louise king 11.05.2021

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, Manager)

Manager

Date to be reviewed: 04/05/23

Date reviewed: L C King

Signed:

Date reviewed: 16/10/2024

Signed: L C King

Date reviewed:

Signed:

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Pre-school Learning Alliance publication Complaint Investigation Record (2012)
- [Pre-school Learning Alliance Registered Childcare Policies](#)