

### **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Information and records**

Providers must put in place a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and/or carers.

## **St Matthew's Pre-School**

### **7.9 Making a complaint**

#### **Policy statement**

Preschool 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 preschool and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of preschool. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly in 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 preschool to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

#### **Procedures**

We are required to keep a written record ('complaints summary log') of any complaints that reach stage 2 and above and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

#### *Making a complaint*

##### **Stage 1**

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of preschool's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with a preschool manager.
- 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 to a preschool manager and the chair of committee.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, a letter may be written by a manager/the preschool chair and signed by the parent.
- We store written complaints from parents in a locked safe.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the preschool manager/preschool chair 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 notes are kept with the letter of complaint in the safe.

### Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the preschool manager and the chair of the committee. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the manager should have the support of a committee member, or the senior manager.
- 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 notes of the meeting are stored along with the original complaints letter in the safe.

### Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and preschool cannot reach agreement, 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.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the preschool manager and chair of the committee 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 a copy is also held in the pre-school safe.

### Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the preschool manager and the chair 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 a copy is kept in the safe.
- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the preschool'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.
- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is:  
0300 1234 234 [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)
- These details are displayed on our Preschool's notice board in the foyer.

- If a child appears to be at risk, preschool follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in Surrey by contacting MASH on 03004709100
- In these cases, both the parent and preschool are informed and the setting manager works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board in Surrey to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

### *Records*

- A record of complaints against preschool and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded and is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request it is stored in the safe.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

St Matthew's Preschool

Held on

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Date to be reviewed

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Signed on behalf of the management committee

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Name of signatory

\_\_\_\_\_

Role of signatory

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