

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.

10.9 Making a complaint

Policy statement

Thurton & Ashby St. Mary 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 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 Early Years Alliance publication Complaint Investigation Record (2012), which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

Our Complaints Policy is available to all families as part of the registration process. It is also available on our Website – www.thurtonpreschool.com

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with Ellen Mussell, Playleader.
- Where parents/carers are not satisfied that their child is receiving the free entitlement in the correct way (as set out in the Funding Agreement and in Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities), a complaint can be submitted to Ellen Mussell, Playleader or directly to the local authority by e-mail earlyyearsandchildcare@norfolk.gov.uk or by telephoning 01603 222900.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

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- 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 the setting leader and the chairperson of the management committee.
- 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 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 setting leader 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 setting leader or chairperson 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 Complaint Investigation Record.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the setting leader and the chairperson. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and the leader should have the support of the chairperson of the management committee.
- 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 Complaint Investigation Record.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and setting 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.
- Our Early Years Advisor will be invited to act as mediator if acceptable to both parties.

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- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. She can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (setting leader and chairperson) 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 she gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the setting leader and the chairperson 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 Norfolk

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 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. The number to call **Ofsted** with regard to a complaint is: **0300 123 1231 or write to Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street MANCHESTER M1 2WD**. These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the setting leader works with Ofsted or the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- The Information Commissioner's 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 Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or ico.org.uk

Records

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- A record of complaints in relation to our setting, or the children 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 in the Complaint Investigation Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

This policy 10.9 was adopted at a meeting held by Thurton & Ashby St. Mary Pre-school

Held on

Signed by Chairperson

Guidance

- Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities – March 2017
- Early years Entitlement: Operational Guidance for Local Authorities and Providers – April 2017

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Complaint Investigation Record (2012)

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