

Complaints Procedures

Document version control

1.0	2008	First version
1.1	Jan 2011	Format for complaints record updated
1.2	April 2013	Policy reviewed. EYFS themes added
1.3	October 2017	Amended in line with Local Agreement requirements

Statement of intent

First Steps Pre-school aims to provide the highest quality education and care for all our children. We aim to offer a warm welcome to each individual child and family and to provide a warm and caring environment within which all children can learn and develop as they play.

First Steps Pre-school believes that children and parents/ carers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our pre-school and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the pre-school. 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.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.2 Inclusive practice	2.1 Respecting each other 2.2 Parents as partners	3.2 Supporting every child 3.4 The wider context	

Aim

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our pre-school to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Methods

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure.

Our Complaints Policy is issued to all families as part of the registration process. It is also available via our webpage or upon request.

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 directly to Andrea Jolly.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent/ carer who is uneasy about an aspect of the pre-school's provision talks over, first of all, his/her worries and anxieties with the pre-school's supervisor.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent/ carer moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the pre-school's supervisor and a copy to the management team.
- If the complaint is about the supervisor, the MT will deal with it. If the complaint involves a member of the MT, other members will deal with the complaint. The same process below should be followed-
- Written complaints from parents/carers are filed in the child's file. If the complaint involves an investigation, the information may be recorded in a file designated for the complaint.
- When the investigation is completed, the supervisor (or MT if they have been dealing with it) meets with the parent/carers to discuss the outcome.
- Parents/carers must be informed of the outcome within 28 days of making a complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summary is logged in the Complaints Summary Record. The supervisor should advise the MT that the complaint has been resolved.

Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally at Stage 1 or at Stage 2.

Stage 3

- If the parent/carers is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she should request a meeting with the pre-school supervisor and a member of the management team. This should in preference be a member who has not been involved with the previous stages. Both the parent/ carer and the leader should have a friend or partner present if required. An agreed written record of the discussion is made. 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 3 meeting the parent/ carer and pre-school 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 discussion confidential. She/he can hold separate meetings with the pre-school personnel (Pre-school supervisor and member of the management team) and the parent/ carer, 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/ carer, the pre-school leader and a member of the management team 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, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board.

- Parents/ carers may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of our registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the National Standards for Day Care are adhered to.
- The details of how to contact Ofsted are displayed on the notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our pre-school follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (NSCB).
- In these cases, both the parent/ carer and pre-school are informed and the pre-school supervisor works with Ofsted or the NSCB to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint followed by appropriate action.

Records

A record of complaints against our pre-school and/or the children and/or the adults working in our pre-school is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

All settings are required to keep a summary log of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond. This is made available to parents/carers as well as Ofsted inspectors.