

## Complaints Policy

### **Policy statement**

Hound Owls Preschool believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy, kindness and prompt and careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parents and the community and we welcome any suggestions on how to improve our preschool. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly using an informal approach. 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 preschool to a satisfactory conclusion for all parties involved.

### Procedures

#### Stage 1

- Any parent, who has a concern about an aspect of our preschool, should first of all talk about his/her concerns with the preschool management.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- We will record the concern, and how it was resolved, in the child's file. If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent should move to stage 2 of the procedures.

#### Stage 2

- The concerns or complaint should be made in writing to the preschool manager. The preschool will respond in writing, within 28 days of receipt.
- All written complaints from a parent will be stored in their child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the preschool management may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file, designated for the complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the preschool management will meet with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is made available to Ofsted if they

request it. Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally at stage 1 or at stage 2.

### Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she must request a meeting with the preschool management. The parent may have a friend or partner present if required.
- 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 must 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 recorded in our Complaint Investigation Record.

### Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting, the parent cannot reach agreement with the preschool, 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 Preschool Learning Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the preschool 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 and the preschool management. 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 that this will help for 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 Ofsted

Ofsted regulate the preschool. We are subject to regular Ofsted inspections to ensure that we comply with the various regulations. Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaint's 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 whose duty it is to ensure that the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to. Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone, email or in writing at: Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD, Telephone Number: 0300 123 1231 or [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) These contact details are displayed on our notice board. Ofsted will become involved if there seems to be a possible breach of our registration requirements. In these cases, both parents and the preschool would be informed. Ofsted would conduct 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. The ICO can be contacted by [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk). We believe that most complaints are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that is in the best interests of the pre-school and parents, that complaints should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly, in a way which respects confidentiality.

Policy adopted - January 2021