



Complaints Policy

We believe children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parents and the community generally, and we welcome suggestions on how to improve Whitsers at any time. A record of complaints against our setting 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 in the Summary Complaints Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request. This information may be used for risk assessment when reviewing our policies and procedures. Many concerns can be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, the following procedures should be used. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Complaints Process

1) A parent who is uneasy about any aspect of the group's provision should first of all talk over any worries and anxieties with the Play Leader. Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

2) If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent/carer, or if the problem recurs, the parent/carer should put the concerns or complaint in writing to the Play Leader and the Chair of the Playgroup Committee. Details of the current committee can be obtained from any member of staff.

Complaints are kept in a folder / book locked in the filing cabinet. If a complaint involves a detailed investigation, we may store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.

When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Play Leader will arrange to meet with the parent to discuss the outcome. This will be within 28 days of the original complaint. A summary of the complaint, who it was made by, which National Standard it refers to and action taken /to be taken, will be logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

3) If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, the parent can request a meeting with the Play Leader and the Chair of the Playgroup Committee. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required. An agreed written record of the discussion will be made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting will sign the record and receive a copy of it. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, a log is made in the Complaints Summary Record.

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, for example staff or volunteers at the Pre-school Learning Alliance. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both

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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 will keep all discussions confidential and can hold separate meetings with the Play Leader/Chair and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator will keep an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice given.

5) When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the Play Leader and the Chair will be 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 will be 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, will be made and 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 Registering Authority

In some circumstances, it will be necessary to bring in the registering body, Ofsted, which has a duty to ensure that the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to. Ofsted would be involved if there seemed to be a possible breach of registration requirements. In this case both parent and playgroup would be informed and the fieldworker would work with the registering body to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint was made and appropriate action was taken. Any parent or carer who wants to contact Ofsted direct should write to Early Years, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD, or contact their Complaints and Enforcement line on 0300 123 1231, www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents (these details are displayed on the Playgroup notice board).

If a child appears to be at risk, Whitsers follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority. In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the setting leader works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

We believe that most complaints are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that it is in the best interests of Whitsers, children attending playgroup and parents that complaints should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way which respects confidentiality.