



COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS POLICY

Statement of intent:

Teston & Wateringbury Preschool believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We pride ourselves on working in partnership with parents and the local community and we welcome suggestions at any time on how to improve our group. We will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the pre-school and we expect 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.

Aim:

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our pre-school to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. To achieve this, we operate the following procedure.

Making concerns known:

Stage 1

- A parent who has a concern about any aspect of the pre-school's provision should first of all talk over any worries and anxieties with the preschool manager who will liaise with the Trustees
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at Stage 1.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent should put the concerns or complaint in writing to the preschool manager.
- Written complaints from parents are stored in a separate complaints and concerns folder which is stored in a lockable grey cabinet on the premises. If a detailed investigation is required a separate folder will be created for a particular complaint/case.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the preschool manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- The parent who made the complaint will be provided with an account of the findings of the investigation and any action taken as a result within 28 days.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, a summary of the outcome is logged in the complaints and concerns folder.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, s/he requests a meeting with the preschool manager. The parent can have a friend or partner present if required and the preschool manager should have the support of one of the Trustees
- 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, a summary of the main points is logged in the complaints and concerns folder.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent and setting can not 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.
- Staff or volunteers within the Pre-school 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 manager, trustee and 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 his/her investigations, a final meeting between the parent, preschool manager and trustee is held. The purpose of the 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.

Record-keeping:

Copies of all complaints are kept for a minimum of three years – see *also* **RECORD-KEEPING POLICY**

The role of the registering authority - Ofsted:

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 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage is adhered to. Ofsted can be contacted at:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone 0300 123 1231

Ofsted website: **www.ofsted.gov.uk**

The contact details for Ofsted are also displayed on a poster in the hall and contained in every issue of our termly newsletter.