

## **Complaints Policy**

### **Policy statement**

At Natural Nurture Nursery we believe 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 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**

- The nursery is required to keep a written record of all complaints and their outcome. This is made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors.
- Forms for recording complaints are available on the nursery website or from the office on request.
- The nursery will fully investigate written complaints relating to our fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, and ensure that complainants are notified of the outcome within 28 days of making the complaint.
- Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy for complaints involving allegations of serious harm or abuse. As safeguarding concerns these do not fall within the scope of this policy.

### **Making a complaint**

#### **Stage 1**

- Any parent/carer who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the Nursery Manager. Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

#### **Stage 2**

- 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 Manager, or the Chair of the Management Committee.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.
- The nursery stores written complaints from parents in a designated file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Manager may wish to store all information in a separate file designated for this complaint.

- The nursery acknowledges the complaint immediately. The parent will be notified that an investigation into the complaint will take place and that they will be informed of the outcome as soon as possible.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Manager 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. During this time, contact is made regularly with the parent to reassure them that the process is underway.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Record.

### **Stage 3**

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the Manager and the Chair of the Management Committee. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the Manager should have the support of the Chairperson.
- An agreed written record is made of the discussion and of 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 Complaints 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.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the nursery personnel (Manager and Chair of the Management Committee) and the parent, if this 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, the Manager and the Chair of the Management Committee 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.
- If the complaint is regarding the Nursery Manager his/herself, the complaint is addressed in the first instance directly to the Chair of the Management Committee. The procedure will be followed as above but the Chair will meet with the parent following the investigation process at Stage Two. The Nursery Manager will join the meetings as per Stage Three when the Chair decides an amicable conclusion may be reached. If agreement is not reached, the process will proceed with a mediator as per Stage Four.

## **Reporting**

The role of the Ofsted and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, in the case of a possible breach of the nursery's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- The number to call Ofsted regarding a complaint is: 0300 123 4666  
Ofsted address: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.
- These details are displayed on our setting's noticeboard. Parents are invited to read this policy on the website during the admissions process and can request a hard copy at any time.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority (see Safeguarding Policy).
- In these cases, both the parent and nursery are informed and the Manager works with Ofsted and the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

## **Records**

- A record of complaints against our nursery 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 Complaints Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Natural Nurture Nursery Management Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016.