



Parent Complaints Policy and Procedures (2022)

Policy statement

At Christ Church Playgroup, 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 prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach with 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

All settings are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of our setting's provision talks over his/her concerns with the manager first of all.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- We record the issue, and how it was resolved, in the child's file.

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.
 - For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, the manager can provide a template form for recording complaints
 - The form may be completed by our manager and signed by the parent.
- Christ Church Playgroup stores all information relating to written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the manager may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.

- Christ Church Playgroup will inform parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of her/him making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points will be logged in the setting's Complaints file, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, she or he may request a meeting with the manager and the chair. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer.
- 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, the summative points will be logged in the setting's Complaints file, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent cannot reach agreement with the Playgroup, then the Playgroup will 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 to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
 - Staff or volunteers within the Early Years Alliance or the Local Authority are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with staff 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 manager and chair 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 summative points will be logged in the setting's Complaints file, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board or local safeguarding partners and the Information Commissioner's Office.

- 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 Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at
 - Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
 - Tel: 0300 123 1231
- If a child appears to be at risk, the Playgroup follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board or local safeguarding partners.
 - In these cases, both the parent and Playgroup are informed and the manager works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board or local safeguarding partners to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
 - Where there are serious safeguarding concerns, the Manager will contact the LADO (Local Authority Delegated Officer) immediately.
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if a parent has made a complaint about the way their data is being handled, and if the parent remains dissatisfied after raising their concern with the Playgroup. For further information about how we handle your data, please refer to the Privacy Notice given to you when you registered your child at our setting.
 - The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or www.ico.org.uk

Records

- A record of complaints in relation to the setting, or the children or the adults working in our setting, is kept for at least three years. Each record will include the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in our Complaint file, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.

This policy is an updated version of earlier policies and will be submitted for approval by the committee during 2022.

Manager: Elsa Smirthwaite

Chair: Janet Gilbert