

Complaints Procedures

As a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance we aim to provide the highest quality education and care for all our children. We aim to offer a welcome to each individual child and family and to provide a warm and caring environment within which all children can learn and develop as they play.

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 our group at any time. 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.

How to complain

- 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 Pre-school Leader.
- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome within 28 days, or if the problem recurs, the parent should put the concerns or complaint in writing to the Management Committee.
- The next stage is to request a meeting with the Pre-school Leader and Committee Chair.
- Both Parents and the Leader should have a friend or partner present if required and an agreed written record of the discussion should be made.

Most complaints should be resolved informally or at this initial stage.

- If the matter is still not sorted out to the parent's satisfaction, the parent should again contact the Management Committee. At this point, if parent and group cannot reach agreement, it might be helpful to invite an external mediator, one who is acceptable to both parties, to listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to help 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 will be available to act as mediator if both parties wish it.
- The mediator will keep all discussion confidential. S/he will meet with the group if requested and will keep an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he has given.
- The involvement of a mediator represents the final stage in the complaints procedure.

The role of the registering authority

In some circumstances, it will be necessary to bring in Ofsted (the registering body), which has a duty to ensure laid down requirements are adhered to and with whom the Pre-school Learning Alliance works in partnership to encourage high standards. Ofsted would be involved if a child appeared to be at risk or where there seemed to be a possible breach of registration requirements. In these cases both parent and pre-school would be informed and the Pre-school Learning Alliance fieldworker would work with Ofsted to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint followed by appropriate action.

The address and phone number of Ofsted is:

Complaints and Enforcement, Ofsted, The Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square,
Manchester, M2 7LA. Telephone number 0300 123 1231.

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 the pre-school and parents that complaints should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way that respect confidentiality.