

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Information and Records

Providers must put in place a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and/or carers, and must keep a written record of any complaints, and their outcome.

10.12 Making a complaint

Policy statement

At Harvey Bears Nursery and Pre-school, 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. A full procedure is set out in the *Complaint Investigation Record* (Early Years Alliance 2015) which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

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 our 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, there is a template form for recording complaints in the Complaint Investigation Record; the form may be completed by our manager and signed by the parent.

- Our setting stores all information relating to written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, our 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, our manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- We inform parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of him/her making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with our manager and the chair.. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and our manager should have the support of the management team.
- 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, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent cannot reach agreement with us], we 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 us 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 our 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 our 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.

Safeguarding Children Partnership 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
- These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, we follow the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- In these cases, both the parent and our setting are informed and our manager will work with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if you have made a complaint about the way your data is being handled and remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us. 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 ico.org.uk

Records

- A record of complaints in relation to our setting, or the children or the adults working in our setting, is kept for at least three years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in [our/my] Complaint Investigation Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.

Whistleblowing

Harvey Bears is committed to delivering a high quality Pre-school service. In line with this commitment we expect all staff and volunteers to acknowledge their responsibility, to bring to the attention of the manager (where appropriate) or a member of the committee, any concern, suspicion or allegation against another member of staff, volunteer or committee member. This will lead to an investigation taking place.

Harvey Bears guarantees to provide individuals with protection from victimisation or punishment if a concern, suspicion or allegation is made. (Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998)

Reasons for Whistleblowing: -

Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice

- To safeguard children
- To prevent the problem worsening
- To protect, or reduce the risks to others
- To prevent oneself from being implicated.

Procedure

- Raise concern with Manager (if the Manager is implicated with a member of the committee.
- Be specific about your concern, naming dates and times.
- Put your concern in writing, including specific details.
- Ensure you get a satisfactory result.

How a raised concern will be dealt with.

- The concern will be investigated with the defendant given the opportunity to put their case.
- The person raising the concern will be treated respectfully and listened to.
- The person the concern is about will be treated respectfully and listened to.
- The reporter of the concern will be kept up to date of the progress of the report.

If an employers concern is to do with safeguarding of young children, and they feel unable to talk to the Manager or a committee member, they can contact Ofsted directly.

- Call 03001231231 (Monday – Friday 8am – 6pm)
- E-mail whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
- Write WBHL, Ofsted, New Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Stone Street, Manchester, M1 2WD