1.10 Making a complaint

Policy statement

Our playgroup is committed to providing a safe, stimulating, consistent and accessible service to children and all parents/carers. We always aim to provide high quality services for everyone and we believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt 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 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.

Under normal circumstances the Manager will be responsible for managing any complaints made, unless the complaint is made against the Manager and then the Chairperson or an appointed Committee Officer will conduct an investigation. All complaints made to staff will be recorded in detail in the incident book.

1. **Procedures**

All settings are required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors. A full procedure is set out in the Pre-school Learning Alliance publication *Summary Complaints Record* which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

1.1 ***Making a complaint***

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the manager.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage. If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to stage 2

Stage 2

- The parent must put their concerns or complaint in writing to the setting's Manager and the Chair of the Committee. Details of relevant names, dates, evidence and any other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included
- We will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible, within three working days at least, and fully investigate the matter. If there is any delay, we will advise the parents/carers of this and offer an explanation. The Manager and/or chairperson of the management committee will be responsible for sending them a full and formal response to the complaint.
- If the Manager has good reason to believe that the situation has child protection implications then Social Services will be contacted in accordance with our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy. If any party involved in the complaint has good reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed then the police will be contacted.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the setting leader 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 setting 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. This formal response will include details of any actions taken, or to be taken, and any amendments to the policies or procedures as a result of the investigation. This response will be sent to the parents/carers concerned and all relevant and appropriate staff
- The Manager will arrange a time to meet the parents/carers concerned and any other relevant individuals, such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint and the response to it. The Manager will judge if it is best for all parties to meet together or if individual meetings are more appropriate
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the setting leader and chair of the management committee. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the leader should have the support of the chairperson of the management committee. 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 are logged in the Complaints Summary 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.
- Staff or volunteers within the Pre-school Learning Alliance or PATA are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (setting leader and chair of the management committee) 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, the setting leader and 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.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

- 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 Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is:

  0300 123 1231

- These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership in our local authority.

- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the setting leader works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

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

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	St Christopher's Playgroup	name of setting
Held on	September 2026	(date)
Date to be reviewed	September 2027	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee	KJCookes	
Name of signatory	Karen Cookes	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Manager	

Other useful Early Years Alliance publications

- Summary Complaints Record (2006)