



1.9 Safeguarding children - Making a complaint

Policy statement

We believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courteous and 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 Acorns. 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

We 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. All complaints, no matter how minor, are thoroughly investigated internally and used as an opportunity for us to improve practice. They are then reviewed to ensure that any changes required have been made and to ensure that we feel that complaints have been handled fairly and objectively. The investigation is led by Sandra Matthews, or in the case of the complaint being made against her, the investigation would be led by Catherine Kaiser. Records of complaints are kept for three years and then destroyed.

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 their key person or setting leader, if they feel that they are able to do so. Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage. We would assure parents that we prefer to know if there is a problem, so that it can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

Stage 2

- If stage 1 does not have a satisfactory outcome, if the parent feels unable to discuss the concerns, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the setting leader.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, all information relating to the investigation will be stored confidentially in a separate complaint file.
- When the investigation is complete, the setting leader meets with the parent to discuss the outcome. She will also write to parents to summarise the complaint, any outcomes and actions taken as a result.
- All complaints will be acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt, and investigations will begin as soon as possible. Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation **within 28 days** of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record, which is kept in a confidential file. The summary record is made available to Ofsted upon request.

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 one of the owners. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required, and the leader should have the support of a co-owner, present.
- 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 and stored in the Complaints file, as described in Stage 2. The complainant will have 14 days to appeal, after which time the matter will be considered closed.

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.



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- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (setting leader and owners) and the parent, if it is decided that this would 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 an owner 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 complainant is given a further 14 days to appeal. If no appeal is received, then the matter is considered to be closed. Again, the recording procedures are as described in stage 2.

The role of the Ofsted and/or North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership;

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, for example with regard to safeguarding, health and safety, or legal 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; Or in writing;

Ofsted, North Region Centre, 3rd Floor, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Anne's Sq, Manchester, M2 7LA

These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.

Safeguarding -

- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the NY Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the setting leader works with Ofsted or NYSCP and Local Area Designated Safeguarding Officer (LADO) to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- In the case of a complaint about a member of staff with regard to Safeguarding, the procedures set out in our safeguarding policy (section 1.1) will be followed.

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 is reviewed annually by the setting's management to ensure that any changes have been implemented and that all complaints have been handled correctly.
- Although complaints are kept confidential, any safeguarding concern over-rides confidentiality, and may have to be passed on to the relevant authorities.

Copies of our Complaints Policy are available in the cloakroom. If a parent does not wish to make a complaint in person, they can write to, or nominate a third party to write to,

Mrs S Matthews (Manager)
Acorns Playgroup,
C/o Bilton Grange School,
Bilton Lane,
Harrogate HG1 3BA.

Date of Policy Sept 24. Review date Sept 26.