



Complaints Procedures Policy

By post
Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel: **0300 123 1231**

We aim to provide the highest quality education and care for all the children in our care. 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/carers 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.

If you have a complaint

Our promise to you:

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- If your complaint is urgent, we will deal with it more quickly.
- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right.
- You will get a full and clear written reply to formal complaints within 28 working days.

How to make a complaint

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

First Step

- If you have a concern about anything we do, or if you wish to make a complaint, you can do this by telephone, in person or in writing. We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation. If there is something you are not happy about, or you don't understand why we are doing something in a particular way, please come in and discuss it with the manager or another appropriate member of staff, such as the special needs co-ordinator (SENDCo) if it's about special needs.
- We know that it can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge, but if you don't tell us what is worrying you, we cannot explain what we are doing or try to put it right.

Second Step

- If you are not satisfied, you can complain formally by filling in a form, which is available from the manager. Address the form to the Elders of the United Reformed Church. The manager will tell you who the Elders are. The chairman will then arrange for your complaint to be investigated and considered and will reply within 10 working days to give you a progress report and tell you what will happen next. When your complaint has been fully investigated you will be told of the outcome in writing.
- If the matter is still not sorted out to the parent/carer's satisfaction, the parent/carer should again contact the Elders.
- If the parents/carers and group cannot agree, 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 clarify the situation.
- The mediator will help define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.

The role of the registering authority

- In some circumstances, it will be necessary to bring in the local authority registration and inspection unit (Ofsted), who have a duty to ensure laid down requirements are adhered to. The registering authority would be involved if a child appeared to be at risk or where there seems to be a possible breach of the registration requirement.
- 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/carers that complaints should be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way, which respects confidentiality.

Disciplinary and grievance procedure for URC Pre-School employees

Minor disagreements:

It is recognised that disagreements may arise among pre-school staff or between staff, the Minister and Elders of the United Reformed Church, Harpenden (URC). These can usually be resolved informally by discussion.

Disciplinary procedure

If a more serious situation arises when a dispute cannot be resolved, or when the Elders of the URC Harpenden are dissatisfied with the conduct or activities of an employee. Instant dismissal is possible only in extreme circumstances of gross misconduct.

Examples of such misconduct would be:

- Theft or fraud
- Ill-treatment of children
- Assault
- Malicious damage
- Gross carelessness which threatens the health and safety of others.
- Being unfit through the use of drugs or excessive alcohol.

Otherwise, an employee will not be dismissed without the appropriate warning. Any disciplinary matter will normally be dealt with in three stages.

- an oral warning
- a written warning
- a notice of dismissal

The employee may be accompanied by a friend or trade union official at each stage if she/he wishes, and that friend or trade union official may speak on her/his behalf.

If on oral warning is to be given:

The employee should be interviewed by the Minister of the URC Harpenden and the Pre-School Manager, who will explain the complaint.

- The employee will be given full opportunity to state her/his case.
- If the warning is still considered to be appropriate, the employee will be informed:
- What action should be taken to correct the conduct
- That she/he will be given reasonable time to rectify matters.
- That if she/he fails to improve then further action will be taken
- That a record of the warning will be kept.
- That she/he may appeal against the decision.

If the employee fails to correct her/his conduct and further action is necessary:

The employee will be interviewed and given the opportunity to state her/his case, as before. If the need for disciplinary action is established, a letter will be sent to the employee immediately. The letter must:

- Contain a clear reprimand and give the reason for it.
- Explain what corrective action is required and that reasonable time will be given for improvement.

- Warn that failure to improve will result in further action being taken.
- Explain that she/he has the right to appeal against the decision.

If the employee still fails to correct her/his conduct, then:

- The employee will again be interviewed and given an opportunity to state her/his case as before.
- If the decision is to dismiss, the employee will be given notice of dismissal, stating the reasons for the dismissal and giving details of the right to appeal.
- If progress is satisfactory within the time given to rectify matters, the record of verbal warning on the individual's file will be destroyed.

Appeals

At each stage of the disciplinary procedure the employee must be told she/he has the right to appeal against any disciplinary, and that the appeal must be made in writing to the Pre-School Manager or the Elders within five days of a disciplinary interview. The Elders of the URC Harpenden will normally hear the appeal, and it will be heard as soon as possible. The procedure will be informal, and the employee may take a friend or trade union official to speak for her/him.

- The employee will explain why she/he is dissatisfied and may be asked questions.
- The Pre-School Manager or Minister of the URC Harpenden will be asked to put her/his point of view and may be asked questions.
- Witnesses may be heard and may be questioned by the Elders of URC Harpenden and by the employee and the Pre-School Manager or the Minister of URC Church Harpenden.
- The Elders of URC Harpenden will consider the matter and make know their decision.
- A written record of the meeting will be kept. If the employee remains dissatisfied, she/he may appeal to the PSLA Branch or County Executive Officer, set up an appeals procedure within two weeks of receiving the request. Procedure will be as above.

Suspension

If the circumstances appear to warrant instant dismissal, an employee may be suspended while investigations are made.

Grievance procedure

If an employee is dissatisfied, she/he must have the opportunity for prompt discussion with her/his immediate supervisor. For the Pre-School Manager this would normally be the Minister of URC Harpenden. For other pre-school staff, it would be the Pre-School Manager. If the grievance persists, a sub-committee of the URC Elders should be set up for the purpose of further discussion, at which the employee may, if she/he wishes would be accompanied by a friend.

Last Reviewed January 26

United Reformed Church Pre-School

Formal Complaint Form

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number: Day _____ Evening _____

What is it you want to complain about?

Have you complained to the Manager?

When did you do this?

What happened when you complained to the Manager?

What would you like us to do to put things right?

Signed

Date

Please return this form addressed to the Elders of the United Reformed Church, in a sealed envelope via the Pre-School Manager or post to the following address Vaughan Rd, Harpenden AL5 4ED