



Jeavons Wood Pre-school

Complaints and Concerns Procedure

Dealing with Complaints

Initial Concerns

Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the number of formal complaints. Concerns should be handled, if at all possible without the need for formal procedures.

Concerns need to be treated seriously and courteously and given the time necessary for the complainant to feel that the matter has been dealt with properly. It would be helpful if staff were able to resolve issues on the spot, including apologising where necessary.

All staff involved in informal concerns will keep written records. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem at this informal stage, including, possibly, the offer of a conciliation meeting. Complainants who remain dissatisfied at this stage will be informed that they have the opportunity to make a formal complaint. Parents can request support from the Education Adviser Team in writing their complaint and in following the formal procedure, by phoning 01223 706 399.

Investigating Complaints

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint makes sure that they:

- Establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- Meet the complainant or contact them;
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- Keep notes of the interview.

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure Jeavons Wood Pre-School will keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology;
- An explanation;
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- An undertaking to review Pre-School policies in light of the complaint.

Persistent Complaints

If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of the Governing Body is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

Time Limits

Complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. An effective complaints procedure will have realistic time limits for each action within each stage, within ten working days. Working days are when the school is open and children are in attendance. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadline and an explanation for the delay.

THE FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Stages of Complaints

Stage 1

- When making a formal complaint, parents/carers will be reminded of the ten school working day time limits included in the process.
- Formal complaints should be made in writing, should state clearly that a formal complaint is being made and will normally be investigated, in the first instance, by the Pre-school Manager who will provide a response.
- If a complainant has difficulties in the writing of a formal complaint, s/he will be referred to Cambridge County Council's Schools Helpline (01223 706399) for assistance.
- If the complaint directly concerns the Pre-School Manager complainants will contact, in writing as above, the Head teacher or Chair of Governors, who will investigate the complaint.
- In some cases, a complaint may lead to disciplinary action against an individual, for which there are separate procedures. If this is the case the complainant will be informed that the complaint will be pursued through disciplinary action. Under the Governing Body's disciplinary procedures, the outcome of these procedures is confidential.
- The investigator will aim to complete the investigation and respond to the parent within ten working school days. If they cannot provide a full response within ten working school days then they will write to the complainant explaining this and giving a date by which they will provide a full response.

Stage 2

- The complaint is heard by the Chair of Governors. The Chair will determine a method of further investigation and provide a formal response to the complainant.
- If the Chair of Governors feels that it would not be appropriate for him/her to investigate the complaint, s/he may delegate the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body or another governor to carry out the task and report confidentially to him/her. The complainant will receive a written response to his/her complaint.
- When receiving the results of an investigation into a formal complaint carried out by/on behalf of the Chair of Governors, complainants should be informed of their right to request a review by a Panel of the Governing Body and reminded that the time limit for requesting a review

hearing is ten working school days from the date of receiving feedback from the investigation.

- A formal complaint against a governor other than the chair should be referred to the Chair, who will investigate and then decide on any appropriate action. In extreme cases this might include making a recommendation to the Governing Body about possible suspension.

Stage 3

- If complainants are not satisfied with the response at stage 2 they may ask for the complaint to be reviewed by the Complaints Appeal Panel of the Governing Body.
- This panel will be composed of three to five members of the School's Governing Body who have no connection with the issues under review. The panel may choose their own chair. The proposed date for the panel to provide a response following the review should normally be communicated to the complainant within ten working school days of receipt of the request for review.
- The complainant and the Pre-School will be invited to submit any further written submissions to be reviewed by the panel.
- The Committee will decide if the complaint has merit by reviewing the written information and any written submissions provided by any party. The Committee will make any recommendations it feels appropriate to enable resolution of the matter.
- The outcomes of this panel review will be communicated in writing to both sides by the Chair of the Panel within ten working school days of the review with reasons for the outcomes.

Policy Written - June 2013

Date Reviwed - March 2020

Date to be reviewed - March 2021

Signed:

Dated:

Governor: