

## **Complaint Policy statement**

Pickering Pre-school Playgroup 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 Pre-school and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the Pre-school. 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 Pre-school to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. We believe that it is in the best interests of the parents and the pre-school manager that complaints are taken seriously, and that they are dealt with in a way that respects confidentiality. OFSTED can be informed at any point in the complaints procedure.

### **Procedures**

All settings are required to keep a **Complaint Summary Record** of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors.

If the complaint is against a member of staff and falls within child protection / safeguarding, then this policy it to also be referred to. Similarly the Whistleblowing, Staff Behaviour and Employee Disciplinary policies may be referred to.

### **Making a complaint**

#### **Stage 1**

Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the Pre-school's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the Pre-school manager. 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 to the pre-school manager and chairperson of the management committee. For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, the complaint form may be completed with the manager or chairperson and signed by the parent. The pre-school stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the 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, the 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. 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 manager and the chair of the management committee. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the manager should have the support of the chair of the management committee, or other competent person 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 on the **Complaint Summary Record**.

#### **Stage 4**

If at the stage three meeting the parent and Preschool 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 or the Pre-school are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.

The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the Pre-school personnel (Pre-school manager and chair of the 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 Pre-school manager and the owner/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 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 Pre-school'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**, [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

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

If a child appears to be at risk, our Pre-school follows the procedures of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP). In these cases, the parents of the child and Pre-school would be informed unless this would put the child at risk of further harm, the Pre-school manager and committee works with Ofsted or the NYSCP to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action. Please refer to our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy.

#### *Records*

A record of complaints against our Pre-school and/or the children and/or the adults working in our Pre-school is kept on the Complaint Summary Record, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed. The details of all complaints are recorded in the complaints folder which is available to Ofsted inspectors on request. Should additional associated paperwork be generated as part of the complaint process a copy of this is also to be kept.

#### *Additional Contact details*

Should the complainant require the chairperson to be contacted, the chairperson is:

**Richard Allenby. Email: [richallenby1@gmail.com](mailto:richallenby1@gmail.com) telephone: 01751 467560**

#### **Links to other organisational policies and procedures.**

**Other policies and procedures relate to Employment and Staffing matters and should also be consulted, these include:**

- Employment and staffing
- Whistleblowing
- Staff Behaviour
- Employee Disciplinary

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pickering Pre-School Playgroup held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.**

**Date to be reviewed – Before end of August 2024.**

**Signed on behalf of the management committee**

**Name of signatory – Richard Allenby (Chairperson).**