



## **Making a Complaint Policy**

St Marks Pre-school believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. The pre-school welcomes suggestions on how to improve the setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the pre-school. It is anticipated that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach with the appropriate member of the practitioner team. If this does not achieve the desired result, the pre-school has a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. The pre-school aims to bring all concerns about the running of the setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all the parties involved.

All settings are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage 2 and above, and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

### **Making a complaint**

#### ***Stage 1***

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the pre-school's provision talks over his/her concerns with the Pre-school Manager first.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- The Pre-school Manager records 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.
- St Marks Pre-school stores all information relating to written complaints from parents in a 'Concerns' file, which is confidential. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Pre-school Manager will store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Pre-school Manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- The pre-school informs parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of him/her making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the pre-school logs the summative points in the 'Concerns' file, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

#### ***Stage 3***

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the Pre-school Manager and the Committee Chair. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and the Pre-school Manager should have the support of the Pre-school 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 pre-school logs the summative points in the 'Concerns' file.

#### **Stage 4**

- If at the stage 3 meeting the parent cannot reach agreement with the pre-school, an external mediator is requested to help 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 taken so far and suggest further ways in which the issue might be resolved.
- Practitioners or volunteers within the Pre-school Learning Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the practitioner team 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 and the Pre-school Manager and Committee Chair 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, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Information Commissioner's Office**

- 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 the duty to ensure that the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at:

Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD  
Tel: 0300 123 1231

- These details are displayed on the pre-school's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, the pre-school follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- In these cases, both the parent and the pre-school are informed, and the Pre-school Manager will work with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if a parent has made a complaint about the way their data is being handled and remains dissatisfied after raising their concern with the pre-school. For further information about how the pre-school handles data, please refer to the Privacy Notice given to parents when registering a child at St Marks Pre-school. The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk)

**Records**

- A record of complaints in relation to St Marks Pre-school, or the children or the adults working in the setting, is kept for at least three years, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the pre-school’s ‘Concerns’ file, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the pre-school held on ..... (date)

Signed on behalf of the pre-school .....

Also see: Confidentiality and Client Access to Records

Information Sharing

Parental Involvement