

6. Complaints procedure

Version number	Dates produced & approved	Reason for production & revision	Author	Locations	Proposed next review date
V1.0	Jan 2010	First adopted	Committee		
V2.0	July 2016	Reviewed after Ofsted inspection	C Timbrell	Dropbox.com	July 2017
V3.0	Apr 2017	Reviewed and updated to comply with Ofsted & EYFS requirements	K Coupe & H Mansfield	Dropbox.com Website	Apr 2018
V4.0	Oct 2018	Reviewed & typo corrected	K Jones	Dropbox.com Website	Nov 2019
V5.0	4 Nov 2020	Reviewed and updated	J Dyer	Dropbox.com Website	December 2022
V6.0	25 Apr 2022	Update as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reference to Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) to Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partners (GSCP); • list of associated policies & procedures as per GSCP Section 175/157 safeguarding audit 2022 	K Coupe & J Powell	Dropbox.com Website	April 2023
V7.0	May 2023	Reviewed & updated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusion of Committee Chair and Setting Support Officer and their roles when dealing with a complaint; • more information on the role of OfSTED 	J Dyer	Dropbox & website	May 2024

Statement of intent

North Nibley Pre-school believes 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.

Aim

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of North Nibley Pre-school to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Methods

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure.

Under normal circumstances the Playleader will be responsible for managing any complaints made, unless the complaint is against the Playleader and then the Chair of the Management Committee and Setting Support Officer or an appointed committee member will conduct an investigation. All complaints made to staff will be recorded in detail in the incident book.

Procedure

North Nibley Pre-school is required to keep a written record 'summary log' of any/all complaints that reach Stage 2 or beyond and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Office of Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspectors on request.

Any complaint will be recorded on a form kept in the Complaints File along with instructions. Any other complaints, other than those which are minor and can be resolved promptly, will also be recorded on these forms.

Making a complaint

North Nibley Pre-school is committed to open and regular dialogue with parents/carers and the Pre-school welcomes all comments on its services, regardless of whether they are positive or negative.

Stage 1

- Any parent who is uneasy about an aspect of the Pre-school's provision should talk over, first of all, his/her worries and anxieties with the relevant staff member. However, if deemed appropriate the Playleader should be approached to resolve the problem.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found or if the problem recurs, then the parent moves the complaint to Stage 2.

Stage 2

- The parent must put their concerns or complaint in writing to the Playleader and the Chair of the Management Committee/Setting Support Officer. Details of relevant names, dates, evidence and any other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included.
- The Pre-school will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible, within three working days at least, and fully investigate the matter. If there is any delay, the Pre-school will advise the parents/carers of this and offer an explanation. The Playleader will be responsible for sending them a full and formal response to the complaint.
- If the Playleader has good reason to believe that the situation has child protection implications, then action will be taken in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy¹. If any party involved in the complaint has good reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed, then the police will be contacted.

¹ All North Nibley Pre-school's policies can be found on the website: www.northnibleypreschool.co.uk

- North Nibley Pre-school records written complaints from parents/carers in the complaints file, which is stored in a secure filing cabinet.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Playleader will offer to meet with the parent/carer to discuss the outcome.
- Parents/carers must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint. This formal response will include details of any actions taken, or to be taken, and any amendments to the Pre-school's policies and procedures as a result of the investigation. This response will be sent to the parents/carers concerned and all relevant and appropriate staff.
- The Playleader will arrange a time to meet the parents/carers concerned and any other relevant individuals, such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint and the Pre-school's response to it. The Playleader will judge if it is best for all parties to meet together or if individual meetings are more appropriate.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summarised points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 3

- If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he/she can request a meeting with the Playleader and the Chair of the Management Committee and or the Setting Support Officer. The parent may have a friend or partner present if required and the Playleader should be supported by the Setting Support Officer or an appointed committee member.
- 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 should sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- The signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summarised points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent/carer and North Nibley Pre-school 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 within the Pre School and Toddler Association (PATA) are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussion confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the Pre-school personnel and the parent/carer, 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/carer, the Playleader and the Setting Support Officer/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 Ofsted and the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP)

- 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.
- Ofsted states:
 - Ofsted's powers here are limited: we cannot resolve disputes between you and the provider. Our role is to make sure that the childcare provider is following all registration requirements and take action if necessary. To complain about a childcare provider, get in touch with us at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or 0300 123 4666.
 - If you complain, we will review the information you provide and decide what to do. We may carry out an immediate inspection, ask the provider to take action or work with other agencies to look at any issues.
 - However, we will not contact you to let you know the outcome.
 - You can find out more about our powers in 'Information for parents about Ofsted's role in regulating childcare'.
- These details are displayed on our Pre-school notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, North Nibley Pre-school follows Pre-school's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy, which is in line with the procedures of GSCP. In these cases, both the parent/carer and the Pre-school are informed, and the Pre-school's Leader works with Ofsted or GSCP to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- If an allegation is made against a member of staff or committee, North Nibley Pre-school follows the guidance of GSCP when investigating complaints. The relevant agencies will be informed, ie. Safeguarding in Education, Social Care, Child Protection and Sexual Crime Unit (police) and Ofsted.
- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know any information under the guidance of GSCP.

Associated policies and procedures

- No 4: Safeguarding children and child protection