15 Working in Partnership with Parents and other Agencies

**15.03 Complaints Procedure**

**Policy Statement**

Parley Community Preschool 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 setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the preschool. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach. 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 preschool to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

**Procedures**

All settings are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, including 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 setting's provision, first talks over his/her concerns with the preschool manager.
* Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

* If this does not have a satisfactory outcome or if the problem recurs, the parent may choose to move to this stage of the procedure by putting their concerns or complaint in writing to the preschool manager and the committee.
* For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints in the Complaint Investigation Record; the form may be completed with the help from the preschool managers if required, then signed by the parent.
* The setting will store written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the managers 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 managers meet 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 Complaint Investigation Record.

Stage 3

* If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the preschool managers and the chair of the committee. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and the managers and chair should have the support of the management team.
* 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 in the Complaint Investigation Record.

Stage 4

* If at the stage three meeting the parent and setting 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.
* The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the managers and chair 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 managers and the 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 Local**Safeguarding Children Board*

* 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 a duty to ensure the Safeguarding and 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. The address is Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD**.** These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.
* If a child appears to be at risk, Parley Community Preschool follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. To forward a complaint to the them please contact Patrick Crawford (Local authority designated officer) on 01305 221122.
* In these cases, both the parent and preschool committee are informed and the Preschool managers work with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

*Records*

* A record of complaints in relation to Parley Community Preschool, or the children or the adults working in our setting, is kept; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
* The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaint Investigation Record.