

# Little Fishes Complaints Policy



## **Statement of intent**

Little Fishes 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 Little Fishes. 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 Little Fishes to a satisfactory conclusion for all the parties involved.

## **Methods**

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure. All settings are required to keep a “summary log” of all complaints that reach stage 2 or beyond. This is to be made available to parents, as well as to Ofsted inspectors.

### *Making a complaint*

#### *Stage 1*

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of Little Fishes provision talks over, first of all, his / her worries and anxieties with the Little Fishes 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 moves to Stage 2 of the procedure, by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the Little Fishes Manager and the Management Committee.
- There is a form available for recording complaints. For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, the form may be completed with the manager and signed by the parent.
- Little Fishes 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. The Management Committee is kept informed.
- 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 Little Fishes 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.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All 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 Complaints Summary Record.

### *Stage 4*

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent and Little Fishes cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited 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 so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- The mediator keeps all discussion confidential. He / she can hold separate meetings with the Little Fishes personnel (the Manager and Chair of the Management 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 he / she gives.

### *Stage 5*

- When the mediator has concluded his / her investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the Little Fishes Manager and the 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.

Regulations require providers to give an account of the findings of the investigation into the complaint and any action taken, to the parent who made the complaint, within 28 days of the date of the complaint.

### **The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (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 National Standards for Day Care are adhered to.

- The address and telephone number for Ofsted is:

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD (Nov. 2011)  
Telephone: 0300 1231231

- These details are displayed on Little Fishes notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, Little Fishes follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. See Little Fishes Safeguarding Policy.
- In these cases, both the parent and Little Fishes are informed and the Little Fishes manager works 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 against Little Fishes and / or the children and / or the adults working in Little Fishes 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 Complaints Summary Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

*This policy is reviewed and updated (if necessary) every September at a meeting of Little Fishes Nursery School.*