



Registered Charity No.: 1155711

Complaints Policy

We believe children and parents/carers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and respect of their wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parents/carers and the community generally and we welcome suggestions on how to improve our Pre-School at any time.

We will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about our Pre-School. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of the Pre-School to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the Manager. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with these concerns.

Complaints Procedure

We operate a five stage action plan to deal with any concerns raised.

Stage One

Any parent/carer who has a concern about an aspect of the Pre-School's provision should first approach the Manager. Most concerns can be resolved amicably and informally at this stage. A record will be kept of any informal complaints dealt with at Stage One in the Pre-School Complaints Folder.

Furthermore, the Pre-School undertakes a Parent Feedback Survey every year, from which feedback is noted and analysed. Should any complaints/issues arise within this feedback, the Pre-School will be proactive in contacting the parent/carer where they have included their contact details, and seek to resolve the concern.

Stage Two

If there is not a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent/carer should put their concern or complaint in writing to the Manager and to the Committee Chair.

The Committee Chair will undertake an investigation into the complaint or cause for concern. The Committee Chair may ask staff involved with the complaint to make a written statement explaining the exact situation. When the investigation is completed, the Manager and Committee Chair will meet with the parent/carer to discuss the outcome. This will happen within twenty-eight days of the original complaint being made.

Stage Three

If the matter is still not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent/carer, then a meeting should be requested with the Manager and the Committee Chair. The parent may have a friend or partner present if required. 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 stage three of the procedure has concluded.

Stage Four

If at the stage three meeting the parent/carer and the Pre-School cannot reach agreement, the Pre-School will invite an external mediator in 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.

Staff or volunteers within the Pre-School Learning Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators. Pre-School Learning Alliance can be contacted on 020 7697 2500. In addition, Surrey Early Years Advisors or Childcare Officers are willing to act as mediators; Surrey Early Years can be contacted on 01372 833 833.

The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. Separate meetings can be held with the Manager and Committee Chair and the parent/carer if relevant. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice given.

Stage Five

When the mediator has concluded their investigation, a final meeting between the parent/carer, the Manager and the Committee Chair is held. The purpose of the 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.

Records

A record of all complaints resolved at stage one is kept in the Pre-School Complaints Folder. For complaints that are resolved at stage two or beyond, a Provider Complaints Record is also completed and kept in the Pre-School Complaints Folder. This record includes the date and circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed, and will be kept for a minimum period of ten years from the date of the original complaint.

The Pre-School Complaints Folder is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors to review on request.

Fees

If a child has been withdrawn from the Pre-School as a result of a complaint, then a fee refund will be considered as part of the investigation, but will depend on the individual circumstances and findings of the investigation into the complaint.

The role of Ofsted and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

We would hope that parents/carers feel that they can initially approach the Manager or Committee Chair with any concerns or complaints. However, if they do not wish to do so, they may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of the complaints procedure. In addition, if a breach of the Pre-School's registration requirements is suspected, it is essential to involve Ofsted as they have 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 and the address is: - The National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD. These details are displayed on our notice board.

If a child appears to be at risk, our Pre-School follows the procedures of the Surrey Area Safeguarding Children Board. In these cases, both the parent/carers and the Pre-School are informed and the Manager works with Ofsted or the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by the appropriate action.

This policy has been adopted by St Martin’s Pre-School Committee:

Date:	
Signed:	
Role of signatory:	