

Hemingford Grey Playgroup Policy: Complaints Procedure

July 2015

Introduction

Hemingford Grey Playgroup believes that children and parents/carers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our Playgroup and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. 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 and complaints.

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our Playgroup to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Procedures

All providers 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. To achieve this, we will complete a copy of the 'Provider Complaints Record' (OFSTED 2005) for any complaint received at this level. A copy of each completed 'Provider Complaints Record' will be kept in a file specifically for that purpose and will comprise the 'Summary Log'.

Stage 1

- Any parent/carer who has a concern about an aspect of the Playgroup's provision will be asked, first of all, to talk over his/her worries and anxieties with a member of staff or the Playgroup Manager.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

- If a satisfactory outcome is not reached in stage 1, or if the problem recurs, the parent/carer moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting their concerns or complaint, in writing, to the Manager and the Chair of the Playgroup Management Committee.
- For parents/carers who are not comfortable with making written complaints, the 'Provider Complaints Record' may be completed with the Manager or Chair of the Playgroup Management Committee and signed by the parent.
- The Playgroup will store written complaints from parents/carers in the complaints file.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Playgroup Manager or Chair of the Management Committee will meet with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, a summary of points will be logged in the Complaints Summary Log.
- At this stage, any complaint received by the Management Committee will be acknowledged within 3 working days and a full response will be offered within 10 working days.

Stage 3

- If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of our investigation, he or she should request a meeting with the Playgroup Manager and the Chair of the Management Committee. The parent/carer 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 will be made, as well as any decision or action to be taken as a result of the discussion. All of the parties present at the meeting will 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, a summary of points are logged in the Complaints Summary Log.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent/carer and Playgroup cannot reach agreement, an external mediator will be invited to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, should 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.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. He or she can hold separate meetings with the Playgroup personnel (Manager and Chair of the Management Committee) and the parent/carer, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator will keep an agreed written record of any meetings that are held, and of any advice he or she gives.
- When the mediator has concluded his/her investigations, a final meeting between the parent/carer, the Playgroup Manager and the Chair of the Management Committee will be 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 will be used to reach this conclusion. The mediator will be 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, will be made. Everyone present at the meeting should sign the record and receive a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

- Parents/carers may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of a complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the Playgroup'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 appropriate address and telephone number for reporting complaints to Ofsted are as follows:
 - The National Business Unit, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

- 0300 1231231
- www.ofsted.gov.uk
- If a child appears to be at risk, the Playgroup follows the procedures of the 'Local Safeguarding Children Board', for our local authority. In these cases, both the parent/carer and the Playgroup will be informed. The Playgroup Manager will work with Ofsted or the 'Local Safeguarding Children Board' to ensure there is proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- A record of all complaints against our Playgroup and/or the children and/or the adults working in our Playgroup is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed. The information will be kept for a period of 10 years.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaints Summary Log, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Hemingford Grey Playgroup Committee, held on 8th June 2010, and reviewed on 26th June 2012 and 1st July 2015.

Signed by the chairperson on behalf of the Committee:

..... (Chairperson's name - block capitals)

..... (Chairpersons signature)

..... (Date)