

Complaints Procedure

1. Statement of intent/policy statement

Conkers Nursery believes that all its users are entitled to expect courteous and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. If any aspect of the nursery falls short in this standard, it is fair and appropriate that users are able to complain, and have an established procedure for doing so.

2. Aim/purpose

Conkers Nursery will:

- Welcome suggestions on how to improve its services and facilities
- Give prompt and serious attention to any concerns regarding its services and facilities. It is anticipated these will generally be resolved quickly and informally. Should this not be the case, there is a set of procedures for addressing concerns.

3. Scope

This policy applies to everyone at the nursery including staff , parents/carers, students and volunteers.

4. Legal context

This policy is covered by:

- Sure Start Children's Centre Practice Guidance 2005 & 2006
- Statutory Guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006, 2013
- The Children Acts 1989 & 2004, Adoption and Children Act 2002
- EYFS Statutory Guidance 2014
- Childcare Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 1998 and 2003

5. Mandatory systems and procedures

How to complain

Stage 1

- Any parent/carer who is uneasy about an aspect of the nursery provision is welcome, and invited to, discuss his/her worries and anxieties with the child's Key Person or the duty manager.
- We aim to respond to and resolve concerns or complaints immediately, particularly if there is a safeguarding concern
- Parents have the right to make their concerns known to Ofsted. The contact number for Ofsted is 0300 123 1231

Stage 2

- If this initial conversation does not reach a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem arises again, then the parent/carer moves to this second stage
- This involves putting the concern or complaint in writing to the nursery manager
- It would be expected that most complaints might be resolved informally at either Stage 1 or Stage 2

Stage 3

- The nursery manager invites the parent/carer to a meeting to discuss the letter. Normally this meeting would take place in the Balsam Centre, to ensure privacy, but if requested, and subject to any suitable Risk Assessment, this could take place in a neutral venue, or indeed the family's home if required. The parent/carer may also choose to be accompanied by a friend or partner for support
- It is important for the nursery manager to have a colleague present; this person can verify the conversation at a later stage if needed
- A written record of the meeting is made and details of any agreed outcomes or decisions are carefully stated. This is signed by all those present as an accurate record, and this also signifies that the procedure has concluded satisfactorily for all concerned
- At a later stage a typed version is produced and sent to the family, with a copy kept on file in the nursery

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting there is no resolution to the concern, then the meeting is concluded with the agreement that a mediator is invited in to help settle the complaint
- This person should be acceptable to both parties, able to listen to both sides and then offer advice that leads to an acceptable way forward. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and then objectively suggest strategies to avoid future difficulties
- The mediator should keep records and knowledge of these discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with relevant staff from the nursery and the parent/carer if this is thought to be helpful
- The mediator will keep an agreed written record of any meetings that are held, any advice given and any agreed outcomes

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded his/her investigations, a final meeting between the parent/carer and the nursery manager is held
- The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action that needs to be taken to deal with the complaint
- The advice given by the mediator is used to inform this decision, so s/he should also attend this meeting to clarify or explain the decision-making

- 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
- In accordance with EYFS Welfare Requirements, all complainants must receive notification of the outcome of a complaint within twenty eight days of the complaint being made.
- Records of all complaints and their outcomes are kept and made available for Ofsted.

6. **Information**

Reference will be made to this policy and procedures on the website and in all publicity leaflets and in any contract with parents.

Involvement/Consultation

- Regular newsletters for parents and carers
- Home visits to discuss anything affecting the family
- Sharing any concerns about children with a family as soon as possible, in line with the County Council policy on information sharing. Details of this can be found on www.makingthelinks.org.uk

7. **Related policies**

All our policies may be read in conjunction with this policy.

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping staff, parents, volunteers and the management committee informed, trained and up-to-date with procedures, the Nursery can avoid the need for complaints. However, the manager is the first point of contact for any queries over this policy and its related procedures.

Monitoring and Reviewing

- It is the responsibility of the nursery manager and staff to monitor and review the effectiveness of all policies relating to the nursery
- The nursery manager and staff will review and update this policy annually.
- The nursery staff will update and amend this policy and its procedures in line with any emerging and relevant government legislation or county council guidance

Informing Parents of Changes to Policy

Our policies are reviewed regularly with a month's notice given of any changes. Parents are notified in writing, usually with their invoice or newsletter. A returns slip is included for parents to confirm they are aware of and agree to any changes. The returns slips are kept for our records.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review