



Little LODGE

0 - 4 YEARS CO-EDUCATIONAL DAY NURSERY

Complaints Procedure

Approved by: Natalie Snyder, Nursery Manager

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Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Aims	2
3. Complaints Procedure.....	3
4. Legislation and Guidance	3
5. Scope of the Policy.....	3
6. Persistent correspondence	3
7. Stages of complaint procedure	4
7.1. Stage 1 - Informal Complaint	4
7.2. Stage 2 – Formal Complaint.....	4
7.3. Stage 3 – External Agency Support and/or Panel Hearing	4
8. Referring complaints on completion of the Nursery’s procedures.....	5
9. Anonymous Complaints	6

1. Introduction

Little Lodge Nursery prides itself on the quality of the education and care provided to its children. However, if parents do have a complaint they can be expected to be treated by the Nursery in accordance with this Procedure. Our aim is to have an open organisation, climate and culture.

2. Aims

The Nursery recognises and acknowledges parents’ entitlement to complain. Little Lodge welcomes all constructive feedback and will endeavour to always provide the best educational provision possible. We hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. A concern or a complaint may be made if a parent thinks that the Nursery has:

- > done something wrong
- > failed to do something it should have done
- > acted unfairly

We consider a complaint to be one which is made formally in writing and has failed to be resolved by stage 1 of the complaints procedure and has then been escalated to Stage 2. A complete record of formal complaints (from stage 2) and actions will be kept.

Findings that proceed to a panel hearing will be available on the Nursery premises for inspection by the Directors. We will aim at all times to:

- > Be impartial and non-adversarial
- > Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- > Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- > Respect complainants’ desire for confidentiality
- > Treat complainants with respect and courtesy

- > Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- > Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- > Consider how the complaint can feed into Nursery improvement evaluation process

3. Complaints Procedure

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

The Nursery will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full. To support this, we will make sure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the Nursery website.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

In addition, it addresses duties set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework](#) with regards to dealing with complaints about the Nursery's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

4. Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements set out [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#).

It is also based on guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on [creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations](#), and refers to [good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

5. Scope of the Policy

This policy does **not** cover complaints procedures relating to:

- > Admissions
- > Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- > Safeguarding matters
- > Exclusion
- > Whistle-blowing
- > Staff grievances
- > Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

6. Persistent correspondence

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.

7. Stages of complaint procedure

7.1. Stage 1 - Informal Complaint

Informal Complaints may be made initially on an informal basis by letter, telephone call, e-mail, verbally or during a meeting. They should normally be raised with the key worker or room leaders in the first instance, or with the relevant member of staff for a particular issue. Any concern referred to a member of staff should be resolved normally within five working days.

Concerns made directly to a member of Nursery Leadership Team will usually be referred to the relevant room leader unless deemed more appropriate to be dealt with personally.

7.2. Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If the concern persists and cannot be resolved on an informal basis, it should be taken to the Nursery Manager as a written letter of complaint (whether written by email or by hand). The Nursery Manager, or the member of staff deemed most appropriate to handle the complaint, will then investigate the matter and reply normally within 10 working days.

The investigating officer for any such complaints will have the authority and standing to investigate the matter and the ability to make recommendations for improvement should any arise. For Little Lodge, either the Nursery Manager or the Compliance Officer, Mrs Helen King, will be most likely to act as the investigating officer for Stage 2 Complaints.

The Nursery Manager and the Compliance Officer have the authority and standing to make recommendations to the Board of Directors should there be any.

The Investigating Officer will usually invite the Complainant for a meeting to provide opportunity to discuss the matter (whether in person or online). There may be circumstances where a meeting is not required but this should be in exceptional circumstances only.

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 working days. Parents may contact Ofsted at any time if they have concerns about the Nursery meeting EYFS requirements. However, we encourage parents to use our internal complaints procedure first, as this often resolves matters more quickly. Ofsted does not investigate individual complaints but may use complaints to inform future inspections. The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted on request.

A written record of all complaints that reach stage 2 will be kept and such record cover whether they are resolved following this procedure, or proceed to panel hearing and cover the action taken by the Nursery (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). While formal written records are kept from Stage 2, the Nursery maintains a log of Stage 1 concerns to identify patterns and support continuous improvement.

A copy of the complaint record accompanied by a letter will be given to the complainant within 28 days (if it relates to the Early Years Register) or 20 days (if it relates to the Compulsory Childcare register.)

The record of complaints must be made available to OFSTED and ISI on request.

7.3. Stage 3 – External Agency Support and/or Panel Hearing

If parents are still not satisfied with the response from Stage 2, they may request that the complaint be placed in the hands of a School Director. The Director receiving the complaint will decide whether the matter may then be reviewed with other agencies (for example Early Years Education and Childcare team to support meeting between the complaining, staff and registered person) or by a panel of at least three people who are not directly

involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom is independent of the running of and management of the Nursery.

For example, the panel might consist of two directors and an outside professional. The Directors will be responsible for the appointment of the panel within 28 working days of a request for a hearing. Parents may attend and be accompanied by a friend if they wish. Legal representation is not appropriate at such a hearing.

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should write to Mr Dai Preston, School Director at the Nursery's address. Mr Preston will then call a hearing of the Complaints Panel and will take responsibility for assembling an appropriate panel as outlined above.

The panel's findings and recommendations will be communicated in writing or electronically to the complainants, Nursery Manager and, where relevant, the person who is the subject of a complaint, normally within 5 working days. The Panel's findings are final.

A written record will be kept of all complaints and will show whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and will list the action taken by the Nursery as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

These records are kept securely within the Nursery office and will remain confidential, except where the Directors or the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

These records should be made available to Directors, Ofsted and/or ISI Inspectorate if requested.

Our 'normal' response times should be met as often as possible. Some flexibility may be required in instances of staff absence or outside of term time where it may be difficult to investigate concerns and complaints. Parents will always be informed where there may be reasonable delays.

All complaints will be retained for seven years.

8. Referring complaints on completion of the Nursery's procedures

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Parents with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can make a complaint to OFSTED in regards to the delivery of the EYFS curriculum, following completion of the whole of the complaints process (including panel hearing). The record of the complaint will be made available to OFSTED upon request. Complainants will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester
M1 2WD

Ofsted Helping: 0300 123 4666

<https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints>

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the Nursery's complaints procedure and the complaint is regarding the Nursery not meeting standards set by the Early Years Statutory Guidance in any of the following areas, the complainant can refer their complaint to Ofsted:

- > Education
- > Pupil welfare and health and safety

- > Nursery premises
- > Staff suitability
- > Making information available to parents
- > The spiritual, moral, social or cultural development of pupils

As part of Arnold Lodge School, complaints about school-age provision (ages 4-18) can be referred to the DfE. For early years provision (Little Lodge Nursery), complaints about EYFS requirements should be directed to Ofsted as detailed above.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:

[Complain about childcare - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-childcare)

The Directors and Nursery Manager will review any underlying issues raised by complaints where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, determine whether there are any improvements that the Nursery can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

9. Anonymous Complaints

It is at the Nursery Manager's discretion what action, if any, should be taken in response to anonymous complaints.

In the past 12 months, Little Lodge has received 1 Formal Complaint [Little Lodge was registered on 30th December 2024].

This policy is available on the Nursery website www.thelittlelodgenursery.com