



Little LODGE

0 - 4 YEARS CO-EDUCATIONAL DAY NURSERY

Complaints Procedure

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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.

Records of complaints, including those escalated to a Director for review, 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, 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 also has regard to good practice guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE) on handling complaints.

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
- > Matters relating to non-payment of fees

Concerns relating to fees, invoicing or the terms of the parent contract are dealt with under the Nursery's terms and conditions rather than this complaints procedure. Where a matter raises issues both under this procedure and about fees, each will be handled through its respective process, and any recovery of outstanding fees will continue in accordance with the parent contract.

All complaints about the Nursery's provision are considered on their merits. Where a complaint about provision is raised following notice of non-payment or termination of a place, the Nursery will still investigate it fully; in doing so, it may take into account the circumstances and timing in which the complaint was raised when reaching its conclusions.

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 fully considered under this procedure, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy. This includes repeated attempts to re-raise allegations that have already been investigated and not upheld.

7. Stages of complaint procedure

Little Lodge Nursery maintains a clear record of all complaints – whether resolved informally at Stage 1, dealt with at the formal Stage 2, or escalated to a Director for review – together with the action taken by the Nursery (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). This allows leadership to review any patterns and identify improvements to the Nursery's procedures or practice.

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 Head of Nursery as a written letter of complaint (whether written by email or by hand). All Formal Complaints (Stage 2) will be acknowledged in writing within 2 working days.

The Head of Nursery, or the member of staff deemed most appropriate to handle the complaint, will then investigate the matter and reply in writing, notifying the complainant of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of receipt of the complaint, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. Where a complaint is straightforward we will aim to respond sooner.

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, the Head of Nursery will normally act as the investigating officer for Stage 2 complaints, or will appoint another senior member of staff where it is more appropriate to do so.

The Head of Nursery has 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 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 cannot resolve individual disputes between parents and the Nursery, but may use complaints to inform its regulatory activity, including bringing forward an inspection.

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

7.3. Stage 3 – Director Review

The complainant will already have received a formal written response under Stage 2. If they remain dissatisfied with that outcome, they may request that the complaint be placed in the hands of a Director for review. This review sits outside, and follows, the formal Stage 2 response and the statutory notification timescale described above.

The Director receiving the complaint may review the matter personally, or may delegate the review to a person with the standing and knowledge appropriate to consider it and report back to the Board of Directors. This may be the Group's Compliance Officer, Mrs Helen King, or another suitably qualified individual appointed for the purpose. Where helpful, the Director may also draw on support from external agencies, such as the local authority Early Years Education and Childcare team.

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following the formal Stage 2 response), they should write to Mr Dai Preston, Director, at the Nursery's address. Mr Preston will then arrange for the review to be carried out, either personally or by an appropriate person as outlined above.

The findings and any recommendations of the Director Review will be communicated in writing or electronically to the complainant, the Head of Nursery and, where relevant, the person who is the subject of a complaint, normally within 15 working days of the review concluding. The Director Review concludes the Nursery's internal complaints procedure.

A written record will be kept of all complaints and will show whether they are resolved at the formal Stage 2, or escalated to a Director for review; 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 Nursery's complaints procedure. 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 Helpline: 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

Complaints about the Nursery's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage 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](#)

The Directors and Head of Nursery 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 Head of Nursery'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.thelittlelodge.nursery.com