

Complaints Policy

At Dingley's Promise, we believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting 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 [with the appropriate member of staff]. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

All settings are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any person who has a concern about an aspect of our setting's provision talks over his/her concerns with their Centre Manager first of all.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- We record the issue, and how it was resolved in a separate Complaints Record file that will be stored with due regard to confidentiality requirements.
- A copy of the Complaint Record will be available for the complainant.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the Centre Manager or the Operations Manager.
- For any person who is not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints in the Complaints Record Folder; the form may be completed by our manager and signed by the complainant. All complaints must be kept for information and made available for Ofsted.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, our manager meets with the person making the complaint (wherever possible) to discuss the outcome.
- We inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of him/her making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record File, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with our COO (Chief Operating Officer). The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer, and our manager should have the support of the board of directors.
- 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 the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record.
- If the complainant wishes to appeal, then the process of appeal will be handed to the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) who would inform and discuss with the Chair of Trustees, and the Trustee Board.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the complainant cannot reach agreement with us, we invite an external mediator to help to 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 us to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- Staff or volunteers are potentially appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators. The Local Authority Advisers may also be able to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with our staff and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the complainant and our manager and chair of trustees or director is 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 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.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

- Anyone may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at:

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 4666

- There is a designated "parents" poster which is displayed in each of our centres notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, we follow the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- In these cases, both complainant and our setting are informed, and our manager works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- A record of complaints in relation to our setting, or the children or the adults working in our setting, is kept for at least three years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in our Complaints Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.
- All complaints are reported to the Trustee Board in a monthly management report.

Policy Review

Policy reviewed on: April 2025	Signed on behalf of the charity Lee Friend Chief Operating Officer <i>LFriend</i>	Date for review: April 2026
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