

# Somerset Nursery School and Children's Centre

## Complaints Policy

April 2016

Reviewed.....

Due to be reviewed...April 2018.....

Incorporating Battersea Locality Policy

## EYFS: Statutory guidance and legal requirements

Registered providers must put in place a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and keep a written record of complaints and their outcomes.

Registered providers must investigate all written complaints relating to their fulfillment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

Registered providers must provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Providers must make available to parents and/or carers details about how to contact Ofsted, if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. If providers become aware that they are to be inspected, they must notify parents and/or carers. After an inspection, providers must supply a copy of the report to parents and/or carers of children attending on a regular basis.

The record of complaints should be kept for at least three years

## **Aims**

We aim always to work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals in the best interests of the children.

We aim to be open fair and honest when dealing with any concern or complaint and to respect confidentiality.

We aim to give careful consideration to any concern or complaint.

We aim to resolve any complaints quickly whilst allowing time for full discussion.

We aim to resolve all complaints through dialogue and mutual understanding but recognise that we also need to provide an impartial or more formal route for complaints to be made.

Our Governors aim to be supportive in resolving any issues that may give rise to complaint and also to be fair open and honest with all involved

## **Confidentiality**

At all times, all the parties involved with answering a complaint will treat any information they receive as confidential. They will only discuss the matter with those who need to know.

## **Our Complaints Procedure**

In developing and providing services there are times when we won't get it right and mistakes are made. It is important that parents/carers feel able to voice their concerns and that they will be listened to. We aim to deal with concerns in a positive way so that problems are resolved as quickly as possible.

### **First of all : Informal Complaints (Stage1)**

If you have any concerns about your child or the School/Children's Centre, please bring them to our attention as soon as possible. You can talk in confidence to any member of staff. (You will probably have to make an appointment to do this). This member of staff will refer the matter on to the Headteacher. Alternatively, you can talk directly to the Headteacher. You may be invited to attend an informal meeting to discuss the problem.

You are welcome to bring a friend or partner with you when you come to this meeting.

Please tell us what actions you think might put things right.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should raise the matter with the Headteacher or alternatively in writing with the chair of governors.

Please allow us enough time to think carefully about your concerns; we will respond to you as quickly as we can. We will aim to reply to you within 5 school days and to give you our response within 10 working days.

## **Formal Complaints (Stage 2)**

If you feel that your complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, you can make a formal complaint to the Headteacher. This should be in writing. (Form attached)

The Headteacher will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 5 days. She may outline her decision, along with any action to be taken, or she may ask you to come to a meeting to discuss your complaint.

The Headteacher will keep a record of all discussions and decisions relating to your complaint.

If your complaint is an allegation of child abuse, we will follow the procedure outlined by the Local Authority in "Safeguarding Children, Policy and Guidance for Wandsworth Early Years" (2015)

## **How to take the matter further (Stage 3)**

If your formal complaint fails to resolve the matter to your satisfaction, you can lodge your complaint, in writing, with the Chair of Governors (contact details in the school booklet or send to the school office). The Chair of Governors will also need you to tell him what action you have taken so far and what has happened.

The Chair of Governors will respond to you in writing within 15 days explaining his response to your concern, and any action that will be taken. If he has decided not to take any action he will tell you why this is so. He will also tell you how to lodge an appeal if you should wish to do so.

## Appeals to the Governors

If you wish to appeal against the decision of the Chair, the Governors will convene an appeals panel who will meet to carefully and fully consider your complaint and decide what action to take. They will do this within three weeks of your complaint. The members of the panel will not have discussed your complaint beforehand, with anyone. No-one on the panel will have any prior knowledge of your case. You will be invited to attend the meeting, with at least 5 days notice. The panel will make sure that you are made to feel as comfortable as possible at any meeting.

This is the procedure for the appeal hearing.

1. The complainant and headteacher will enter the meeting together
2. The Chair will introduce the panel members and outline the process
3. The complainant will explain the complaint
4. The Headteacher and panel will question the complainant
5. The Headteacher will explain the school's actions
6. The complainant and panel will question the Headteacher
7. The complainant will sum up their complaint
8. The Headteacher will sum up the Centre's actions
9. The Chair will explain that both parties will hear from the panel within 5 working days.
10. Both parties will leave together while the panel decides
11. The clerk will stay with the panel to clarify

The Appeals panel will decide whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint, in full or in part, and decide on the appropriate action to be taken. They will also look at the evidence available and

recommend changes to the Centre's systems or procedures to prevent similar problems arising in the future.

The Governors will do all that they can to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction.

The Panel's decision is final. If you are unhappy with the outcome, you may seek mediation from the Local Authority, or take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education.

### **Local Authority Mediation Role**

Local Authorities are not part of the formal statutory process for complaints. However, they do offer a mediation service if both parties are in agreement. This is an effort to bring both parties together, and not a formal investigation. Wandsworth Local Education Authority cannot impose a resolution to a complaint.

### **Complaints to the Secretary of State**

If you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to complain to the **Secretary of State for Education**.

Again you will have to put your concerns in writing, and address them to:

The Secretary of State for Education

Castle View House

East Lane

Runcorn

Cheshire

WA7 2GJ

You should enclose copies of any previous correspondence relevant to your complaint. The Secretary of State may hear a complaint and intervene if:

- the complaint relates to a failure by the governing body or LA to carry out its statutory duties
- the complainant believes the governing body or LA is acting unreasonably. The test for this is that no reasonable authority or governing body, acting with due regard to its statutory duties, would have reached that decision
- intervention is expedient (i.e., there is an instruction the Secretary of State can give to one or other party that would put matters right).

Alternatively you can write to **OFSTED**, who can consider some complaints.

You can telephone the helpdesk on 0300 1234 234, email enquiries to [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk), or send your written complaint to:

Enquiries

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD



## **Monitoring and Review**

The Governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all complaints received and records how they were resolved. Governors examine the log annually. The policy and our procedure will be reviewed regularly and account taken of any changes that need to be made.

## **Criteria for monitoring**

Have any complaints been logged? Was the process followed and complaints resolved satisfactorily? Did all parties feel that they were treated fairly?

Are staff aware of any complaints that did not receive proper attention?

Have any LA guidelines changed, or addresses? (e.g. OFSTED)

Are parents aware of the complaints procedure?

Have there been any breaches of confidentiality?

## Formal Complaints Form

Somerset Nursery School and Children's Centre

**Name:**

**Contact details:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

### Details of your complaint:

Please describe the nature of your complaint.

### Who did you approach to resolve your complaint informally?

Include staff name and date.

What action was taken to resolve your complaint?

### How do you propose the complaint be resolved to your satisfaction?

#### Where to return this form:

Headteacher  
157-159 Somerset Nursery School and  
Children's Centre,  
Battersea,  
SW11 3ND

#### What happens next:

The Headteacher will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 5 days. She may outline her decision, along with any action to be taken, or she may ask you to come to a meeting to discuss your complaint.