

Complaints Policy

(This Policy is supported by the DfE Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016, attached at Annex A, which provides additional information and should be read in conjunction with this Policy)

INTRODUCTION

Staff at Chichester Nursery School, Children and Family Centre endeavour to work closely with parents, families, colleagues and members of the public, so complaints happen rarely.

The aim of this document is to detail the specific stages of the complaints procedure to ensure clarity to staff, families and Centre users, and a swift resolution to problems.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

Making concerns known

1. If you have a concern or complaint, we would like you to tell us about it. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in the Nursery School, Children and Family Centre. Be assured that no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for you and your child will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate an incident or problem properly if it has happened some time ago.
2. Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's key worker or another relevant member of staff. Please ask any member of the staff if you are not sure who to talk to, and they will help you.
3. If you have a complaint which you feel should be looked at by the Headteacher in the first place, you can contact her straightaway if you prefer. It is usually best to discuss the problem face to face. You may need an appointment to do this, and can make one by ringing or calling in to the office (01243 642950). You can bring a friend or relation to the appointment with you if you wish.

Resolving Problems

4. All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem informally. They will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and they will explain their own actions to you. They will ask what you would like the Nursery School, Children and Family Centre to do to put things right. Of course, this does not mean that in every case they will come round to your point of view but it will help both you and the Nursery School, Children and Family Centre to understand both sides of the question. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

Next Steps

5. If you are dissatisfied with a member of staff's response you can make a complaint to the Headteacher (see point 3). If your complaint is serious then you may wish to put it in writing. A member of the Administration Team can help you to do this, if required.
6. If your complaint is about an action of the Headteacher personally, then you should refer it to the Chair of Governors. You can contact the Chair of Governors in confidence by leaving a note sealed in an envelope in the office.
7. The Headteacher (unless your complaint is about her) will ask to meet you for a discussion of the problem. This should happen within 10 school days of the complaint being brought to his/her attention. Again you may bring a friend or someone else with you if you wish. The Headteacher will conduct a full investigation of the complaint. In most cases the Headteacher will respond to you verbally, but if you prefer, a written response to your complaint will be sent within 15 school days. Even if you have not requested a written response, the Headteacher may think it is better to follow up her verbal response with a letter, especially if her investigation has been complex. The Headteacher will always respond to you in writing if your initial complaint has been made in writing.

Still Concerned

8. Most problems are normally resolved by this stage. However, if you are still not satisfied you may wish to write to the Chair of the Governing body to ask for referral of your complaint to a Governors' Complaints Panel.
9. The Clerk to the Governing body will send acknowledgement of the written complaint within 5 school days
10. The Complaint Panel will then meet within 15 days of the Clerk to Governing body having received the complaint
11. The Chair of the Complaints Panel should notify you and the Headteacher about whether they are invited to:
 - a. attend in person
 - b. submit a written statement only
 - c. submit a written statement and attend in person
12. The complaint will then be heard by a group of three governors who have no previous knowledge of the problem and will be able to give an impartial assessment. The Headteacher will also attend the panel (as long as the complaint is not against him or her).

13. Following the hearing, the Complaints Panel will respond both to you and the school with their Complaint Findings within 10 days. This concludes the Complaints Procedure within the School
14. Complainants who are still dissatisfied with the outcome can refer the matter on to the Secretary of State for Education for further consideration or in some circumstances, OFSTED
15. Following the hearing, the school will have a reasonable amount of time to put in place the recommendations of the panel. It may be that the panel have stipulated a time scale by which certain actions should be completed, otherwise recommendations should be in place by the last day of the next term

Complaints from Colleagues and Members of the Public

16. Occasionally, a complaint might arise from a colleague working for WSCC, a professional partner or a member of the public. In the event of this not being resolved between the parties involved, steps 5 – 15 should be followed.

Date: Autumn 2016

To be reviewed: Autumn 2017