Complaints Policy

# Purpose of this Policy:

# The aim of this policy is to make parents and carers fully aware of what to do if they have a complaint or complement and what steps management will take to ensure the complaint is managed.

Our intention is to work in partnership with parents/carers and actively encourage comments and suggestions so that we can continually improve our services.

We also would like to encourage positive comments, where appropriate; this is a way to ensure good practice is promoted/rewarded. Furthermore, it demonstrates value to our staff who endeavor to achieve excellence.

Ladybird Montessori Nursery considers itself to be a “Learning Nursery”. This means that it actively evaluates its services and practices and continuously seeks to make improvements.

One way in which the Nursery does this is by listening to the feedback from its service users. It recognizes that compliments, suggestions and complaints can provide valuable information about what the nursery is doing well and what it needs to do better. Ladybird Montessori Nursery is therefore committed to taking all compliments, suggestions and complaints seriously and using them constructively to make improvements.

Compliments, suggestions and complaints are underpinned by our core values – inclusion, equity, integrity, creativity and effective communication. Ladybird Montessori Nursery is committed to ensuring that its service users have the opportunity to provide both positive and negative feedback All service users making a compliment, suggestion or complaint are treated with dignity and respect

Service users providing negative feedback are not treated less favorably or denied access to services

Feedback is responded to quickly and effectively and used to make improvements in the Nursery’s services and practices

The training, development and support needs of all managers, staff, volunteers and students in respect of handling compliments, suggestions and complaints are identified and addressed.

To ensure that the compliments, suggestions and complaints procedure is accessible to all customers, the Nursery will:

* Ensure copies of the leaflet summarising the policy and procedure are available and accessible within the Nursery
* Send regular staff and parent surveys for us to review

**Complaints about the service**

A complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about a service or about practice. A complaint implies that the person making the complaint (the ‘complainant’) is not satisfied in some way. Complaints can relate to a wide variety of issues – for example:

* The quality/standard of a service.
* The lack of a service.
* Delay in receiving a service.
* Refusal of a service.
* The conduct or attitude of staff.
* The way in which a decision has been made.

Complaints are a valuable source of information and feedback for the Nursery. They provide an opportunity for the Nursery to step back and to take an objective look at its services and practice, from the point of view of its service users. A complaint may, therefore, result in the Nursery improving and further developing its policies, procedures and services and may also lead to members of staff working more effectively and efficiently.

**Procedure**

In the first instance we would encourage service users discuss any concerns with the child’s key worker and/ or the manager. This is as many concerns can be resolved quickly by an informal approach (see problem solving below). However, if this has not resolved the concern a formal complaint should be issued.

1. Discuss the matter with the manager or depth manager. At this stage they will document the:
   * Nature of the complaint including date and time
   * Action taken initially
   * The subsequent action

We will investigate all written complaints accordingly and inform the complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of receiving the complaint. All complaints are filed in our records and made available to Ofsted upon inspection.

1. If this does not have the satisfactory outcome within a given time frame, or if the problem re-occurs, the parent/carer should put their concerns in writing addressed to the manager of the Nursery. The complainant should receive an acknowledgment of the complaint within 24hours and a subsequent outcome of the investigation within 28 days.
2. If the problem is still not resolved to the parent’s satisfaction, the parent/carer should contact the Owner. The complainant should receive an acknowledgment of the complaint within 48 hours and a subsequent outcome of the investigation within 28 days.
3. If the parent and Owner cannot reach an agreement, an external mediator will be appointed who is agreeable to both parties, to listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action that has already been taken and suggest further ways in which the issue might be resolved. The mediator will keep all discussions confidential. They will keep an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and any advice which may be given. The involvement of the mediator represents the final stage in the complaint’s procedure.
4. If the complaint procedure has not dealt with to your satisfaction the service user should consider contacting OFSTED.

**Problem Solving**

As part of the complaint’s procedure, we look at problem-solving. Unless the complaint is of such a serious nature that it warrants a formal investigation, all complaints will initially be dealt with at this level.

The purpose of this is to try and resolve the issue/difficulty and the person receiving the complaint should immediately consider whether he/she is able to do this. Most complaints should be resolved at this level either by the member of staff receiving the complaint or the manager with responsibility for the service being complained about.

Resolution can often be achieved by:

* Listening carefully to what the complainant is saying
* Ensuring that the complainant knows that his/her complaint is being taken seriously
* Asking what desired outcome, the complainant wants
* Offering an apology if that is appropriate under the circumstances
* Providing information to clarify matters if there has been a misunderstanding
* Assuring the complainant that, if an immediate resolution cannot be achieved, the matter will be properly considered and addressed and feedback provided.

It is useful at this point to remember that when a person complains, he/she expects one or more of the following:

* An acknowledgment of the complaint
* An explanation
* An apology
* The assurance that the issue/difficulty will not arise again

If the complainant’s desired outcomes are met at this stage, the complaint goes no further.

The importance of the complaint’s procedure should not, therefore, be under-estimated.

**The role of the registering authority (Ofsted)**

Details of how to contact OFSTED are available from the Nursery office and displayed in our reception area.

OFSTED Contact Details:

Address 86 High St, Brownhills, Walsall

Telephone Number – 0300 123 1231

Registration Number; EY560729

In some circumstances, it will be necessary contact the registering body regarding a complaint. Ofsted has a duty to ensure legislation and requirements are adhered to in order to encourage high standards.

We believe that most complaints are made constructively and can be resolved at an early stage. We also believe that it is in the best interests of the Parents and the Nursery, that complaints are taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way which respects confidentiality.

We make sure that our record of complaints is available to Ofsted upon inspection.

**Confidentiality**

Ladybird Montessori Nursery recognises that, in the case of complaints, issues of confidentiality need to be given serious and careful consideration.

To ensure that confidentiality is maintained, for those making a complaint as well as for those who are the subject of a complaint, the nursery expects that:

* Managers, staff, volunteers and students who receive a comment leaflet (or assist a service user to complete one) will forward it immediately to the manager and will not discuss its contents with others
* When dealing with a complaint, managers will give careful consideration to issues of confidentiality and will base any decisions on information-sharing on the specific circumstances at the time

**Compliments about the service**

A compliment expresses praise and is an indication that a member of staff, volunteer, student, team or the Nursery as a whole has done something well.

Compliments are a valuable source of feedback because they tell the Nursery what it is doing well. This information allows the Nursery to acknowledge and celebrate good practice and to build on its strengths to further improve its services/practice. Compliments also enable members of staff to receive praise and recognition for what they do well.

The Nursery will try and capture all compliments and will formally acknowledge those received through the suggestions form.

When a compliment is received on a feedback form, it will be passed to the admin then to management. The admin will enter the details of the compliment onto the database and generate a letter of response. This letter, together with details of the compliment, will then be forwarded to the relevant manager who will:

* Send the letter to the person making the compliment to acknowledge receipt and to thank them for the feedback;
* Inform the relevant member(s) of staff, volunteers or students verbally or in writing about the compliment

**Suggestions of service**

A suggestion is an idea or proposal that is put forward for consideration. Suggestions are a valuable source of feedback because they may highlight a shortfall in service or practice. Additionally, suggestions from parents enable the Nursery to consider and implement ideas that may not otherwise have been thought of.

When a suggestion is received by the service users, it will be passed to the admin for logging and processing. The admin will enter the details of the suggestion onto the database, generate a letter of response and inform the management. The letter will be passed to the relevant manager, with the details of the suggestion. The management will then:

* send out the letter of acknowledgment, advising that the suggestion will be considered seriously and feedback provided about the outcome;
* consider the suggestion - either individually or in discussion with the Management Team – and reach a decision about whether it can be implemented or not;
* write to the person who made the suggestion to either inform them of the action that has been taken as a result of their suggestion or to explain why the suggestion cannot be implemented;
* if needed add to the improvement plan or address in relevant meeting where minutes are taken.

**Withdrawal of a complaint**

A complainant has the right to withdraw a complaint at any time. If a complaint is withdrawn, no further action will be taken under this procedure. However, on occasions an incident or event may need to be dealt with under another procedure even if a complaint has been withdrawn (e.g. Disciplinary Procedure, referral to the Police for possible criminal proceedings and so on).

A decision about whether an incident/event is considered under a different procedure in the event of the complaint being withdrawn will be made by the Manager or Deputy Manager in consultation with the management team.

**Persistent Complainant**

A complainant can be regarded as persistent when his/her complaint has been considered and found unjustified but the complainant is either not prepared to accept the conclusion or persists in making the same or similar complaints.

Continuing to respond to persistent complaints can take up a significant amount of time and resources and can cause distress to the staff involved.

Ladybird Nursery believes that a complainant has become persistent it will take legal advice about the matter and will also consult with OFSTED, if appropriate. Following consultation, the Nursery may decide not to pursue the complaint any further.

The decision not to pursue a complaint because it is deemed persistent will be made by the Manager and Owner in collaboration. The person making the complaint will be informed of this decision in writing.

We make sure that our record of complaints is available to Ofsted.

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| **Reviewed by/Date** | **Signature** |
| Joanne Christoforou 11/01/2021 | J.CHRISTOFOROU |
| Joanne Christoforou 18/04/2023 | J.CHRISTOFOROU |