



39. Complaints and Compliments Policy

Policy Statement:

At St Vincent's Nursery we strive to provide the highest quality of care and education for our children and families and believe that all parents are treated with care, courtesy and respect, and receive prompt, careful attention to their individual needs and wishes. We hope that at all times parents are happy and satisfied with the quality of service provided and we encourage parents to voice their appreciation to the staff concerned and/or management. We record all compliments and share these with staff.

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. Any concerns will be dealt with professionally and promptly to ensure that any issues arising from them are handled effectively and to ensure the welfare of all children, enable ongoing cooperative partnership with parents and to continually improve the quality of the nursery.

We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. Where any concern or complaint relates to child protection, we follow our Safeguarding Children Policy.

Aims and objectives:

We aim to be fair, open and honest in giving all complaints and concerns due consideration and to resolve through dialogue and mutual understanding. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

The objective of this policy is to deal effectively with complaints, concerns and compliments by putting the interests and welfare of our children above all else.

Compliments:

If parents / carers have any compliments about the service we provide, we are always happy to receive these.

We welcome and value any compliments we receive from parents / carers and other parties. Whether offered verbally or in writing, we keep a record of the positive comments we receive. Compliments are encouraging for staff and help us to build on our successes for the future benefit of the children.



Complaints:

We are committed to providing a high-quality service and building positive relationships with parents/carers, but understand that sometimes concerns and complaints can arise. Concerns and complaints are respected, valued and appropriately responded to. We are committed to learning from concerns and complaints and will use these to improve our service.

All concerns and complaints will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially. If required, a private meeting will be arranged to discuss these and help to determine how best the matter can be dealt with and the timescale for doing so.

We will retain a written record of all concerns and complaints and how they were resolved for three years.

Parents will be able to access the records of the complaint they had made if they request this, however all personal details relating to any complaint will be kept confidential.

Internal complaints procedure:

Stage 1

If any parent should have cause for concern or any queries regarding the care or early learning provided by the nursery, they should in the first instance take it up with the child's key person or a senior member of staff / room leader. If this is not resolved, we ask them to discuss this verbally with the Nursery Manager.

Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

If the issue still remains unresolved or parents feel they have received an unsatisfactory outcome, then they must present their concerns in writing as a formal complaint to the Nursery Manager. The Nursery Manager will then investigate the complaint in relation to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and report back to the parent within 14 days. The Nursery Manager will document the complaint fully and the actions taken in relation to it.

Stage 3

If the matter is still not resolved, the nursery will hold a formal meeting between the Nursery Manager, parent and the Registered Person to ensure that it is dealt with comprehensively. The nursery will make a record of the meeting and document any actions. All parties present at the meeting will review the accuracy of the record, and be asked to sign to agree it and receive a copy. This will signify the conclusion of the procedure. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the complaint record.

Stage 4

If at the stage three meeting the parent and setting cannot reach agreement, the matter will be referred to the Chair of Governors who will form a complaints committee. The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee.

The committee will decide whether to request written representations before the meeting, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs. If written representations are requested, the committee will prescribe reasonable timescales.

If the complainant attends the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. This must be agreed in advance with the clerk. For instance, if a nursery employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 10 working days before the meeting, the committee will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, attempting by offering three dates that the date is convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 7 working days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 working days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded. The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.



If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems, policies or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and St Vincent's Nursery with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 15 working days.

Stage 5

If the matter cannot be resolved to their satisfaction, then parents have the right to raise the matter with Ofsted.

Parents are made aware that they can contact Ofsted at any time they have a concern, including at all stages of the complaints procedure, and are given information on how to contact Ofsted.

Ofsted is the registering authority for nurseries in England and investigates all complaints that suggest a provider may not be meeting the requirements of the nursery's registration. It risk-assesses all complaints made and may visit the nursery to carry out a full inspection where it believes requirements are not met.

A record of complaints will be kept in the nursery. The record will include the name of the complainant, the nature of the complaint, date and time complaint received, action(s) taken, outcomes of any investigations and any information given to the complainant including a dated response.

Parents will be able to access this record if they wish; however, all personal details relating to any complaint will be stored confidentially and will be only accessible by the parties involved. Ofsted inspectors will have access to this record at any time during visits to ensure actions have been met appropriately.

The record of complaints is made available to Ofsted on request.

We will follow this procedure for any other compliments and complaints received from visitors to the provider, where applicable.

Contact details for Ofsted:

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

By post:
Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Complaint Against a Member of Staff:

If a complaint is made against a member of staff, a full investigation will be conducted.

If the complaint is a serious allegation against a member of staff around their ability to care for or keep children safe that member of staff will be immediately suspended on full pay and the nursery's Safeguarding Children Policy followed. There will be a full investigation until a satisfactory outcome is reached. An advice from LADO will be sought immediately and followed accordingly.

If the complaint does not question a member of staff's ability to care for or to keep children safe, suspension or other procedures will not begin unless the outcome of any investigation warrants such action.

A member of staff against whom a complaint has been made will be given a copy of the complaint and informed that the Nursery Manager will investigate it (unless this is determined as harmful to the fair outcome of the investigation).

Managing Serial, Unreasonable Complaints or Unreasonable Behaviour:

St Vincent's Nursery is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our setting. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

St Vincent's Nursery defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the nursery, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)



- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the nursery's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on nursery time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the nursery that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible, the Nursery Manager will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Nursery Manager will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact St Vincent's Nursery causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from St Vincent's Nursery.

Any unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints will not be tolerated and the same measures will be taken to stop any unreasonable behaviour towards the nursery.