



Ilminster Avenue Specialist Nursery School and Children's Centre

Complaints Policy

Date Agreed: 6th December 2016

Review Date: December 2017

Signed by:

Signature:

Governing body free to delegate to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the Headteacher

Role of Signatory:

1. Rationale

Ilminster Specialist Nursery School and Children's Centre (IASNSCC) works to provide the highest quality care and education for children attending the Setting by holding the principles of welfare and achievement at the heart of its' work. We will endeavour to ensure children are happy during their time at the Setting and that parents/carers are pleased and satisfied with the quality of our service. We will listen and take seriously any concerns or issues raised by parents and take appropriate steps to resolve any problems.

This policy should appear on the Setting website.

This policy works in conjunction with the following policies: Admissions and Allocations, Safeguarding and Child Protection and SEN.

2. Aims

The Setting is continually seeking to improve its work. Comments and suggestions are always welcome as they help us review and, if necessary, change what we do. It is important that you as parents inform us if you are not satisfied with any of the services that we provide. Misunderstandings often arise through a simple breakdown in communication, and if we do not know of your concern we cannot do anything to support you in resolving it. We aim in this policy to clarify the processes regarding complaints to ensure that communication between our Setting and the parents who use is high quality and benefits all concerned.

Our key aim is to encourage the full involvement of all families in the development and progression of the Setting. All meetings are as informal as possible and staff build non-judgmental, professional relationships with the families who use the Setting. Staff encourage families to participate in their children's learning and share successes and concerns. All staff are available to support parents and the key person system ensures that families build good relationships with the staff who work closely with their child. Staff are also available to attend case conferences, reviews and hospital appointments with families. A private space can always be found for conversation and support.

Working closely with families in this way ensures that problems or concerns can be resolved quickly and effectively. Families feel respected and have their views taken into account. As all staff work with families it is easy for individuals to find any member of the team with whom they feel comfortable to share problems and concerns. Staff respect the right of families to make this choice.

We aim to resolve concerns at the earliest possible stage with initial responsibility lying with the Key Person as appropriate.

- We aim to make this complaints procedure available through the Setting's website. A copy of the "Parents – Ofsted contact number" poster must also be displayed in the Setting.

3. Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for the dissemination and review of this policy, but all staff, volunteers and students are responsible for its implementation.

4. Informal discussion with staff

A straightforward informal discussion between those involved may be all that is needed to set things right. It is hoped that the majority of complaints will be resolved informally and satisfactorily through direct discussions with the staff member/s that it involves, or with the child's Key Person.

5. Informal discussion with Headteacher

If your matter is not resolved by speaking informally to staff, you can arrange an informal meeting with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is the subject of your complaint, you should contact Bristol City Council (BCC) directly, as below. No timescale is set out for resolution at this point, given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion.

Headteacher: Claire Shiner 0117 9030255

6. Formal written complaints

If your concern has not been resolved by way of informal discussion with staff members or the Headteacher (or you don't wish to have an informal discussion) you should set out your complaint in writing, outlining the precise nature of the complaint, and address it to the Headteacher. The Headteacher must send a written reply to you, acknowledging your complaint, within 10 working days of receiving your complaint. If there is any delay, we will advise you of this and offer an explanation.

If your complaint is about a general matter, for example, an explanation about a policy, the Headteacher may be able to respond immediately.

If your complaint is about a matter which is subject to specific policy and procedures, for example, Entitlements, Admissions, or failure to assess Special Needs, then you may find it useful to contact the Family Information Services (FIS). This BCC funded organisation provides free, impartial information and guidance on a full range of childcare and children's services and resources across the City of Bristol. Telephone: **0117 357 4192**, or email your concern to askcyps@bristol.gov.uk.

If your complaint is about a specific incident action or event, the Headteacher will need to carry out an investigation.

7. Investigation

Complaints which relate to specific actions or events are likely to need a further investigation in order to clarify the facts. This will normally be undertaken either by the Headteacher or by someone they nominate to investigate on their behalf. The Investigation should normally be completed within 2 weeks of receipt of the complaint, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher must tell you about the outcome of their investigation, and any action they take, or plan to take, as an outcome of your complaint within 28 days.

Sometimes the Headteacher may feel that the matter will be better if your complaint is investigated by someone from BCC. They should tell you if this is the case.

Please note that complaints cannot be considered where issues are the subject of court proceedings.

8. Investigation of complaints about staff

If your complaint is about the conduct of a member of staff, the Headteacher, or the person they nominate, will ask to meet with you before the investigation in order to clarify the precise nature of the complaint and to discuss the ways in which the matter might be resolved.

If a member of staff is the subject of the complaint, he/she should usually be given a copy of the written complaint and advised to contact his/her Trades Union for further advice. If the matter concerns a Safeguarding matter, the advice of BCC must be sought before this information is shared (see below).

The member of staff should be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a “friend” at any subsequent interview or hearing.

The complaint must be treated as an allegation only during the investigation stage.

The Headteacher should invite all parties (including witnesses) to provide written comments as part of the investigation.

If at any time during the investigation there is a prima facie case for disciplinary action, the Setting’s disciplinary procedures must be followed and no further action taken under this Complaints procedure.

If the complaint involves an allegation of a potentially serious criminal nature, the Headteacher must inform the Designated Senior Manager for Early Years within BCC, and maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being considered or investigated.

If the complaint involves a Safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), currently Claire Shiner the Headteacher, must contact the Designated Senior Manager for Early Years, who will then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (DO) to ask for advice and how to proceed, including whether the staff member should be advised of the situation. The DSL may make contact directly with the DO directly, as appropriate (see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). The DSL may on the advice of the DO contact Ofsted to report the allegation.

9. Complaints about the Headteacher

Where the Headteacher is the subject of your complaint, your formal written complaint must be sent to the Children’s Centre Improvement Officer within the BCC, currently Kairen Smith. If they consider it appropriate, the complaint can be shared with the Designated Senior Manager for Early Years within BCC, currently Sally Jaeckle. The complaint will then be investigated using the same procedures that apply to other staff members.

Kairen Smith, Children’s Centre Improvement Officer kairen.smith@bristol.gov.uk

Sally Jaeckle, Designated Senior Manager for Early Years and Early Years Manager 0117 9224895
Sally.Jaeckle@bristol.gov.uk

10. Investigation by BCC

If your complaint has not been resolved by way of a formal complaint made to the Headteacher, you can complain directly to Kairen Smith, the Children's Centre Improvement Officer or Sally Jaeckle, Early Years Manager within the BCC.

Alternatively, you can use the BCC Corporate Complaints Procedure in a variety of different ways. The quickest way to ensure your feedback reaches the Early Years Team, who will investigate, is to use the Council's website: www.Bristol.gov.uk/faircomment. You will find an online form where you can give us your feedback and upload any relevant attachments. You can also post your written complaint to:

Fair Comment,
Freepost BS4341,
PO Box 595,
Bristol BS99 2BR
email: faircomment@bristol.gov.uk

Within 15 working days of receiving the complaint, a manager responsible for the service will investigate the concerns. A senior manager will then take another 15 days to consider your concerns. BCC Complaints will then review your complaint within another 20 days, and report their findings directly to you.

11. Investigation by Ofsted

If you are not satisfied with the response from BCC, or your concern relates to a matter you feel cannot discuss with your provider or BCC, you can contact Ofsted on:

Ofsted

Ofsted National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Helpline: 0300 123 1231
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

12. Records

The Setting must keep a record of written complaints and store them safely, using a Register of Complaints. 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. The record of complaints will be kept for at least 3 years from the date of completion, or longer if there is an outstanding query.

13. Review

This policy should be reviewed annually.