

St Michael's Family Centre Complaints procedure

Statement of intent

Within the Family centre we believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our services and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the centre. 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.

Aim

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our centre to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Methods

Our Complaints Policy is issued to all families as part of the registration process. It is also available via our webpage and upon request.

Where parents/carers are not satisfied that their child is receiving the free entitlement in the correct way (as set out in the funding agreement and in Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities), a complaint can be submitted directly to the Centre Leader.

To achieve this, we operate the following complaint procedure.

How to complain

Stage 1

- Any parent who is uneasy about an aspect of the centre provision talks over, first of all, his/her worries and anxieties with the EYP in the relevant centre or the centre leader.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the Family centre leader and the chair of the management committee.
- Most complaints should be able to be resolved informally at Stage 1 or at Stage 2.

Stage 3

- The parent requests a meeting with the family centre leader and the chair of the management committee. Both the parent and the centre lead can have a friend or partner present if required. An agreed written record of the discussion is made. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.

- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent and 'the family centre' cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- Staff or volunteers within the Pre-School Learning Alliance or Early Years Network are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussion confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the centre personnel (centre manager and chair of the management committee) and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he gives.

Stage 5

When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the centre manager and the chair of the management committee is held.

The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.

- A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (OfSTED) and the Local Safe Guarding Children Board.

Parents may approach OfSTED directly at any stage of this complaint procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of our registration requirements, it is essential to involve OfSTED as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the National Standards for Day Care is adhered to.

The address and telephone number of our OfSTED centre are:

OfSTED: Application Regulatory and Contact (ARC) team OfSTED, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Telephone number: 0300 123 1231. These details are displayed on our family centre parent notice board.

If a child appears to be at risk, our centre follows the procedures of the Local safeguarding Children Board. In these cases, both the parent and centre manager are informed and the centre manager works with OfSTED or the Local Safe-guarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint followed by appropriate action.

Records

A record of complaints against our Family centre and/or the children and/or the adults working in the Family centre is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.