

# Acorn Pre-school and the Mighty Oaks Clubs, Shefford

## Safeguarding Children

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### Making a Complaint

#### Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Information and Records

Providers must put in place a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and/or carers.

#### Policy statement

At Acorn, 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 we can improve and we will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of Acorn. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. However, if this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of Acorn to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

#### EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.2 Inclusive practice	2.1 Respecting each other 2.2 Parents as partners	3.2 Supporting every child 3.4 The wider context	

#### Procedures

All settings are required to keep a record of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors.

#### Making a complaint

##### Stage 1

- Any parent who is unhappy about an aspect of our provision should ask for time to talk over their concerns with the manager.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- We record the issue and how it was resolved, in the child's file.

##### Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent should put the concerns or complaint in writing.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, we have available a template form for recording complaints in our Complaints file, this form may be completed by the manager and signed by the parent.

- At Acorn, we store all the information relating to written complaints from parents in the child's file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation we will store all information relating to the investigation in our complaints file.
- We will inform parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of the complaint being made.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed the manager will meet with the parents to discuss the outcome.

### Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may request a meeting with the manager and/or the management committee chair person. The parent and the manager/chair person may have a friend, colleague or partner present if required.
- A written record will be kept of the discussion as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All the people present at the meeting will be asked to sign the record and will receive a copy of the record.
- The signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we will store all information in our complaints file.

### Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting between the parent and Acorn cannot reach an agreement, an external mediator maybe 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.
- The mediator will keep all discussions confidential. They can hold separate meetings with the setting manager /chair person 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 given.

### Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded their investigations, a final meeting between the parent and our manager/chair person 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, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board**

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure.
- Where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements and/or delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.

Parents can complain to Ofsted in writing or by telephone at:

**The Complaints Manager  
Ofsted National Business Unit  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD**

These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.

If a child appears to be at risk, we are obliged to follow the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the manager works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

**Records**

A record of complaints is kept at Acorn. This record is retained in line with the welfare requirements.

The outcome of all complaints is recorded in this file, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

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**This policy gained staff consent on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

**This policy was the subject of parent consultation between 17<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

**and 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

**This policy was adopted at a minuted full meeting of the Committee held on**

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**Confirmed on behalf of Acorn Pre-school and the Mighty Oaks Clubs**

**Signature .....**

**Position ..... Date .....**