



COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

At Caterpillar Nursery & Preschool we believe that parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their individual needs and wishes. We hope that at all times parents are happy with the service provided and we encourage parents to voice their appreciation to the staff concerned.

We record all compliments and share these with staff.

We welcome any suggestions from parents on how we can improve our services, and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns that parents may have. 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, to enable ongoing cooperative partnership with parents and to continually improve the quality of the nursery.

We believe that Caterpillar Nursery & Preschool provides a good education for all our children. We are pleased with the positive relationships that have been built and maintained with our parents. We understand however that we do need to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by a member of the nursery or wider community.

We have a formal procedure for dealing with complaints where we are not able to resolve a concern. Where any concern or complaint relates to child protection, we follow our *Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.

The Nursery Manager is the Complaints Co-ordinator.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints about Caterpillar Nursery & Preschool are resolved at the earliest possible stage.

1.0 Internal Complaints Procedure

1.1 Stage 1- Identifying a Concern (Informal Stage)

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 discuss the situation with the Nursery Manager.

1.2 Stage 2 – Investigation & Outcome

If the issue 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 manager will thoroughly investigate the complaint and report back to the parent within 7 days. The manager will document the complaint fully and the actions taken in relation to it in the complaints log book.

(Most complaints are usually resolved informally at stage 1 or 2.)

1.3 Stage 3 – Appeal against Outcome and/or Complaint against the Nursery Manager

If the matter cannot be resolved to their satisfaction, or it involves a complaint against the Nursery Manager, then parents have the right to raise the matter with the Board of Trustees. The complainant should write to the Chair of Trustees, at the Nursery address. The envelope should be marked FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION – PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL and the Nursery Manager must ensure that the letter is forwarded without delay.

On receipt of the complaint the Chair of Trustees (or other delegated Trustee) will:

- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

At this point the Chair of Trustees will decide based on the complexity of the complaint whether it should go to the Mediation Stage, or in exceptional circumstances to the Complaints Panel.

1.3.1 Mediation Stage

Mediation can be a good way to resolve a complaint because:

- It gives both complainant and the Nursery Manager another opportunity to hear each other's points of view (with a third party facilitating)
- It gives the third party an opportunity to help the Nursery Manager and the complainant identify and build on areas of agreement
- It gives the Nursery Manager and complainant a structure within which they can resolve remaining differences
- If both complainant and Nursery Manager emerge from the mediation satisfied, this the best foundation for a continuing positive relationship between them
- Even if the complaint continues to a Complaints Panel, the issues are likely to be much clearer following the mediation

Mediation may elicit one or more of the responses listed below, from either party;

- An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part.
- An appropriate apology;
- An explanation;
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- An acceptance that the complaint needs go no further
- A commitment to review nursery policies in light of the complaint.

In the event that mediation is unsuccessful, the Board of Trustees may determine that the complaint is escalated to the Complaints Panel.

1.3.2 Complaints Panel

Where the complainant is still not satisfied that their complaint has been dealt with fully and properly, the Chair of Trustees may choose to take it to a panel that consists of members of the Board of Trustees (including the Chair), and representatives from Brookhurst School Governing Body.

The Chair of the Panel is responsible for ensuring that both complainant and Nursery Manager are given a fair hearing and that the panel arrives at its decision without fear or favour

Remit of the panel:

The complaints panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the nursery's systems or procedures to ensure problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The decision of the Complaints Panel marks the end of the internal process and no further internal recourse is available.

1.4 Vexatious Complaints

There may be occasions when, despite all stages of procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complaint becomes vexatious (e.g. the complainant tries to re-open the same issue), the Chair of Trustees can inform the complainant **in writing** that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. The Board of Trustees should then contact their legal advisors for advice if they intend to do this.

2.0 External Complaints Procedure

If after the internal procedure has been fully exhausted, the matter cannot be resolved to their satisfaction, then the complainant has 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

Contact details for Ofsted:

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

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

The complainant will be informed if the nursery becomes aware that they are going to be inspected and after inspection the nursery will provide a copy of the report to the complainant.

3.0 Record Keeping

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, result 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 to; 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.

4.0 **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is important in securing the confidence of all concerned. Conversations and correspondence must be treated with discretion and investigators should be sensitive to the feelings of those involved. Parents need to feel confident that a complaint will not disadvantage their child. However, the parties to a complaint need to be aware that some information may have to be shared in order to carry out a thorough investigation

5.0 **Monitoring Complaints**

As well as addressing an individual's complaint, the process of listening to and resolving complaints may contribute to nursery improvements. The monitoring and review of complaints by the Board of Trustees can be useful to evaluating the nursery's performance. Any decision of complaints by the Board of Trustees or others in the nursery community should not be named or be able to identify individuals