

## **Concerns, Complaints and Compliments**

Stanmore Montessori believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their 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 the 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. 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. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. Where any concern or complaint relates to child protection, we follow our Safeguarding Children Policy.

### **The difference between a concern and a complaint**

A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Stanmore Montessori takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Manager will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, The Manager will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Stanmore Montessori will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

### **Procedures**

All settings are required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond. This is to be made available to Ofsted inspectors and the complainant on request.

### **Making a complaint**

#### **Stage 1**

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first

of all his/her concerns with the child's key person or the Manager.

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

## **Stage 2**

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the leader/owner.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints available to parents; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the leader may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- The manager will investigate the complaint and report back to the parents within 2 working days.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the leader/manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.
- Most complaints are resolved informally at stage 1 or 2.

## **Stage 3**

- If the matter is still not resolved, the setting will hold a formal meeting with the setting leader/owner and the parent. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the leader should have the support of the manager.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

## **Stage 4**

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and setting 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 Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. He/she can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (setting leader/owner) 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 he/she gives.

## **Stage 5**

- When the mediator has concluded his/her investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the setting leader/owner 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 Safeguarding Children Board**

- Ofsted will not usually consider a complaint if you have not first followed the setting's formal procedure.
- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, 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 are given information on how to contact Ofsted :

**Contact details for Ofsted**                      E-mail: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
Tel:                      0300 123 1231

- These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the setting leader 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 against our setting and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Summary Complaints Record which is available for complainants and Ofsted inspectors on request.
- 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 only be accessible by the parties involved.