

COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy links to the following:

- Lone Working and Home Visiting
- Equality and Diversity
- Volunteering
- Partnership with parents and the local community
- Confidentiality policy and guideline
- Publicity and marketing

Document Control

Amendment History

Version/Issue Number	Date	Author	Remarks/Reason for change	Review Date
1	October 2016	Nikki Gray Daphne Sohl	Aligning Walton Children's Centre and Weybridge Children's Centre	January 2019

This policy will be reviewed in January 2019 or sooner if there are any amendments that need to be implemented following changes in Government legislation/guidelines

Children's Centre Complaints Procedure

1. Statement of intent /policy statement

Walton and Weybridge Children's Centres believe that children and parents/carers are entitled to expect courteous and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. If any aspect of the centre falls short in this standard, then it is fair and appropriate that parents/carers are able to complain, and have an established procedure for doing so.

2. Aim/purpose

Walton and Weybridge Children's Centres:

- Welcome suggestions on how to improve the centre through the Parent Forum and through contact with the centre staff
- Give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the centre. It is anticipated that most concerns will be resolved quickly with an informal approach to the relevant member of staff. If this does not produce the desired result, then there is a set of procedures for dealing with concerns

3. Scope

This policy applies to everyone at the centre including staff, volunteers, families and visitors. 'Staff' includes both those employed by the county council as well as those from other agencies e.g. Statutory and voluntary agencies who provide services for the centre, as part of the multi-agency framework delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. This also applies to staff from the statutory and non-statutory sector; the latter includes private, voluntary and independent groups.

4. What will we do?

Mandatory systems and procedures

How to complain

Stage 1

- Any parent/carer who is unhappy about an aspect of the centre is welcome, and invited to, explain his/her worries and anxieties with the staff member running the group or session in the first instance. If the parent does not wish to speak to the member of staff then they can raise the issue with the Centre Leader/Manager directly.

Stage 2

- If this initial conversation does not reach a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem arises again, then the parent/carer moves to this second stage which is seen as a more formal procedure. This involves putting the concern or complaint in writing to the Children's Centre Lead/Manager.
- It would be expected that most complaints might be resolved informally at Stage 1

Stage 3

- The Children's Centre Lead/Manager invites the parent/carer to a meeting to discuss the letter. Normally this meeting would take place in the centre itself within 7 days of receipt of the letter, but if requested, and subject to any suitable risk assessment, this could take place in a neutral venue, or indeed the family's home. If required the parent/ carer may also choose to be accompanied by a friend or partner for support.

- It is important for the Children's Centre Lead/Manager to have a colleague present; this person can verify the conversation at a later stage if needed.
- A written record of the meeting is made and details of any agreed outcomes or decisions are carefully stated. This is signed by all those present as an accurate record, and this also signifies that the procedure has concluded satisfactorily for all concerned.
- At a later stage a typed version is produced and sent to the family, with a copy kept on file in the centre. This must be undertaken within 30 days from the receipt of the letter.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting there is no resolution to the concern, then the meeting is concluded with the agreement that the Executive Head and a Governor is invited in to help settle the complaint.
- This person is able to listen to both sides and then offer advice that leads to an acceptable way forward. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and then objectively suggest strategies to avoid future difficulties.
- The mediator should keep records and knowledge of these discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with relevant staff from the centre and the parent/carer if this is thought to be helpful.
- The mediator will keep an agreed written record of any meetings that are held, any advice given and any agreed outcomes.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded his/her activity in the case, a final meeting between the parent/carer and the centre staff is held. The purpose of that meeting is to reach a decision on the action that needs to be taken to settle the complaint.
- The advice given by the mediator is used to inform this decision, so s/he should also attend this meeting to clarify or explain the decision-making.
- 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.
- At a later stage a typed copy is produced and sent to the family, with a copy kept on file in the centre.

Final decision

If this process is not completed successfully, then intervention on behalf of the Children's Centre will come in the first instance from the Childcare Advisor. Again, if resolution is not reached through this, then this would go to both the Early Years and Childcare Manager and the person with the lead responsibility for Early Years and Childcare Services. At this level, the Legal Team could also be involved if necessary to act on behalf of the county council.

Record-keeping

A record of complaints against the Children's Centre and/or the adults working in the centre is kept in a secure and confidential location.

Details will include the nature and circumstances of the complaint, the date and how it was managed.

Family Support

The centre takes every possible step to build up trusting and supporting relations with families, staff and volunteers. In the event of a parent/carer making a complaint against the centre, and subject to a satisfactory risk assessment, child/family support and/or childcare will still be made available to the family concerned.



6. How are we going to make sure that this happens?

Implementation, methods

Self evaluation form (SEF) and the annual conversation

This will be monitored on an annual basis with the Advisory Board.

Information

Reference will be made to this policy and procedures in all Children's Centre publicity leaflets and in any contract with parents.

Involvement/Consultation

- Regular newsletters for parents and carers in the centre.
- Home visits to discuss anything affecting the family.
- Sharing any concerns about children with a family as soon as possible, in line with the policy on information sharing.

7. How will we check this?

Monitoring and reviewing

- It is the responsibility of the Children's Centre Lead/Manager to monitor and review the effectiveness of all policies relating to the centre.
- The Children's Centre Lead/Manager will review and update this policy in line with the policy review cycle.
- The Children's Centre Manager will update and amend this policy and its procedures in line with any emerging and relevant government legislation or county council guidance.

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping staff, volunteers, families and the management committee informed/trained and up-to-date with procedures, the centre can avoid the need for complaints.

However, the Children's Centre Lead/Manager is the first point of contact should any queries arise over this policy and its related procedures.

9. Policy endorsement

The policy is agreed and signed by the governing body of Grovelands School

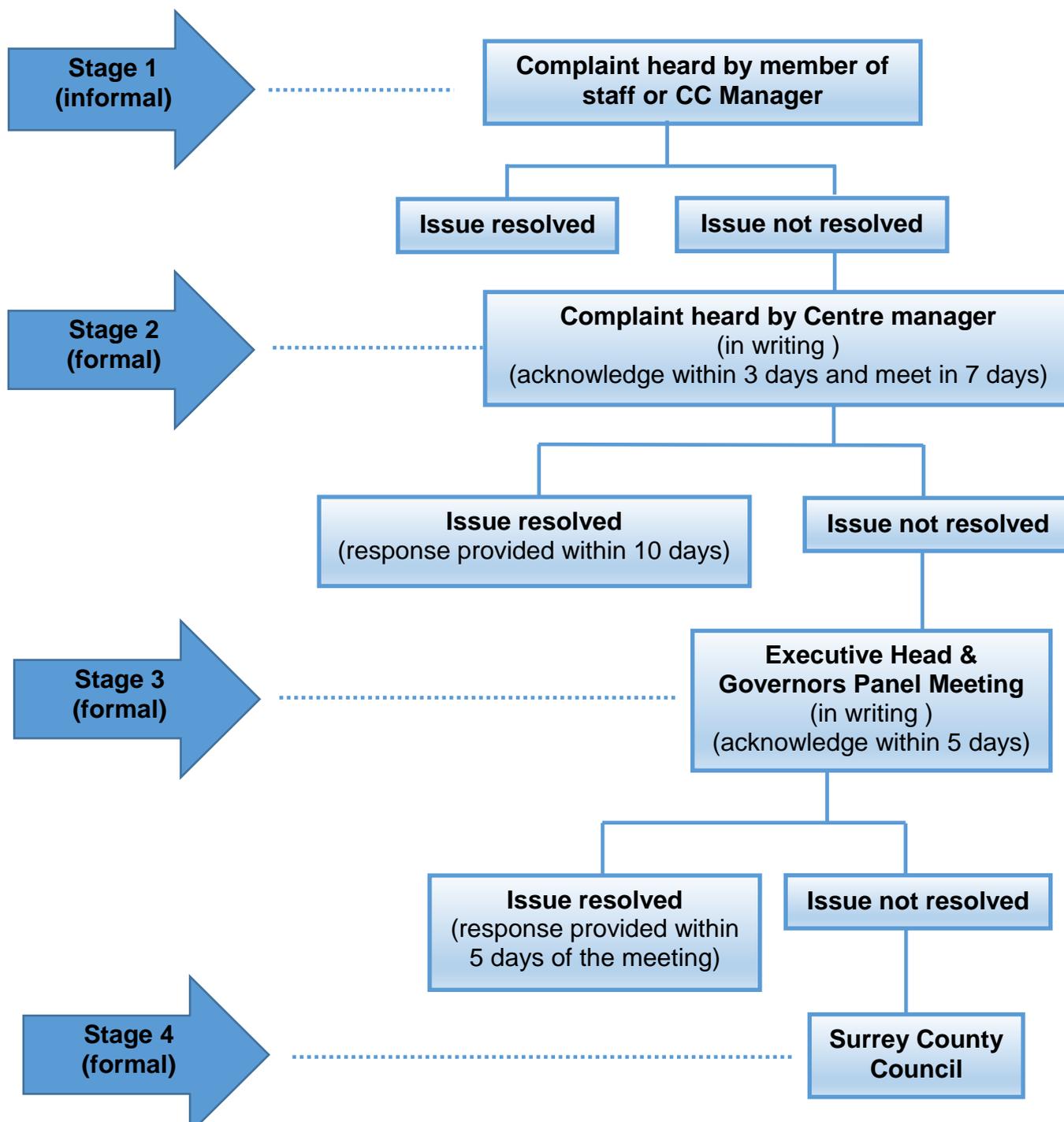
Signed

Signed

Name: Tyrone Lawless
Chair Of Governors
October 2016

Liz Nicholls
Executive Head
October 2016

Walton and Weybridge Children's Centre Complaints Procedure Flowchart



Ofsted believe that most concerns can be resolved at a local level. However, if you feel that your concern is not resolved, Ofsted do have some powers in investigate concerns about services they inspect and regulate. If you have not made a formal complaint to the provider before contacting them, they will ask you to do so unless you have a good reason not to.

Please make some notes before contacting them, including details of any key persons, times and dates. You can make a complaint by letter or email (enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk), by telephone (0300 123 1231) or in person. If your concern was initially made in writing to the provider it is helpful if you send us:

- a copy of your original written complaint
- an account of the findings given by the provider
- any action taken or that is proposed to be taken by the provider
- the reasons why you are not satisfied with provider's response

COMPLAINTS FORM

Please indicate your concern on the form below

Name:		
Address:		
Telephone Numbers		
Home:	Work:	Mobile:
If applicable – Child's name	Date of birth	Relationship to the child:
Please give a brief description of your complaint: Please write overleaf if necessary		
When did you report the problem to the centre?		
To whom at the centre did you report the problem?		
What was the response?		
Have you complained to the centre about this before? YES/NO		
If so, to whom and when?		
What steps do you feel should now be taken by the centre to resolve the matter?		
Signature		Date:

FOR CENTRE USE ONLY		
Date form given/sent to complainant:		Date form received by centre:
Complainant's name:		
Complainant's address:		
If applicable – Child's name and date of birth:		Complainant's relationship to the child:
Complainant's telephone numbers		
Home:	Work:	Mobile
Nature of complaint:		
Actions taken to resolve complaint:		
Outcome of complaint:		
Date forwarded to Executive Head/Chair of the Governing Body for action:		
Any other comments:		
If applicable –Date forwarded to Stage 4		