

Complaints Policy

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Policy Statement

At Young Friends Kindergarten, we are committed to providing the highest quality care and education for children and to building positive relationships with parents, families, staff, and the wider community. We recognise that on occasion there may be concerns or complaints, and we take these seriously. Complaints are an opportunity to listen, reflect, and make improvements, ensuring trust is maintained within our community.

This policy sets out a clear process for addressing complaints fairly, promptly, and transparently.

Scope

- This policy covers complaints from parents, families, visitors, and members of the public.
- **Staff-to-staff concerns, including any allegations of bullying or harassment, follow both this policy and the Bullying & Harassment Policy.**
- Workplace concerns raised by staff that are not about bullying, harassment, or safeguarding follow our **Grievance Policy**.
- **Safeguarding concerns** must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and are dealt with under our **Safeguarding Policy**.

Principles

- **Respectful dialogue** at all times.
- **Timely action** — all complaints are acknowledged within **48 hours** and normally resolved within **28 days**.
- **Fair investigation** — giving all parties the opportunity to share their views.
- **Confidentiality** — information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- **Record keeping** — all complaints are logged and retained in line with our GDPR Policy.

Stages of the Complaint Process

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- Raise the concern with the relevant staff member or a manager as soon as possible.
- Most concerns can be resolved quickly through respectful discussion.
- If appropriate, the manager may facilitate a meeting between the complainant and relevant staff to resolve the issue.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

- If the issue cannot be resolved informally, submit a written complaint to the Manager or Owner.
- The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within **48 hours**.
- The Owner/Manager will appoint an investigating officer (normally a senior manager not directly involved in the matter).

The investigation will:

- Gather written and/or verbal statements from those involved.
- Review relevant records, logs, or CCTV (if applicable).

- Consider any relevant policies or statutory guidance.
- A written response will be provided within **28 days** wherever possible. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed and given a new timescale.

Stage 3 – Appeal

- If you are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, you may appeal in writing to the Owner/Director within 14 days of the decision.
- A review will be undertaken by someone not previously involved.
- The appeal decision will be provided in writing within 28 days.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be considered. However, anonymity may limit the ability to gather evidence or provide feedback.

Safeguarding and Serious Concerns

If the complaint relates to:

- Allegations against a member of staff.
- Any safeguarding concern.

It will be immediately referred to the DSL and handled in line with the **Safeguarding Policy**, including referral to the LADO or Ofsted as required.

Escalation to Ofsted

If you feel your concern has not been addressed appropriately, or if the complaint relates to a child's safety or welfare, you may contact Ofsted:

- Tel: 0300 123 1231
- Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- Online: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Support for Complainants

- Complainants may be accompanied to meetings by a friend or representative.
- We will make reasonable adjustments to the process for accessibility needs.

Record Keeping

- A central complaints log is maintained by the Manager/Owner.
- All complaint records are kept securely in line with our GDPR Policy.

Related Policies

- **Bullying & Harassment Policy** – for staff conduct concerns.
- **Grievance Policy** – for workplace concerns raised by staff.
- **Safeguarding Policy** – for child protection matters.
- **Equality and Inclusion Policy** – ensuring fairness and respect.