

Complaints Policy and Procedures



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Complaints Policy and Procedures

Staff at Ronald Tree Nursery School work with many children, their families and external agencies. The aim of this policy is to clarify how concerns and complaints, from all parties, are dealt with by our setting.

What to do if you have a concern or complaint:

One of our core aims is to establish effective and cooperative communication between parents, staff and governors. We treat all issues raised with consideration and respect and will make every effort to address them.

A concern may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important’. We should be able to resolve the matter quickly (within 3 working days) at an operational level with little or no investigation and to the satisfaction of all concerned.

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

This is where a stakeholder remains unhappy or is unhappy due to a concern being unresolved which cannot be put right quickly at an operational level and requires investigation

We believe that any of our school stakeholders are entitled to comment on the service they receive and will be listened to and their points looked into.

If you are unhappy about any aspects of a child’s care or education in our school, there are a number of steps you may take. If there is a need to complain, we aim to make sure the process is as easy as possible.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Initial approach

Before a complaint is made, parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school first with their concerns and talk to a member of staff or the head teacher. Most problems can be resolved in this way easily and informally.

Stage 2: Raise a formal complaint

Should the initial approach not resolve the issue, the next stage is to raise a formal complaint in writing. In the first instance, this should be addressed to the head teacher. If the head teacher is the subject of the complaint, the Chair of the Board of Governors will complete this stage of the process.

The head teacher (or chair) will:

- Acknowledge receipt to complainant within 7 days
- Formally investigate the complaint and record all information in full
- Communicate the findings in writing or in person within 28 days with an outcome
(unless there is a delay, in which case the reason will be shared)
- Establish if the complainant is satisfied with the outcome

Stage 3: Appeal to the Governing body

If you are still unhappy and there is no resolution after stage 2, you would need to inform the chair of Governors and request a hearing by a panel of the Governing body.

The appropriate panel will meet within one month of the complaint being brought to their attention. You will be asked to meet with the panel and explain your case, citing the reasons for your dissatisfaction and inform them of the outcomes you are seeking.

The panel will record its decisions and any agreements reached.

The Nursery staff will be bound by the decision of the panel and the complaint will be reported to the Governing body in full at their next meeting.

Stage 4:

If you are not happy with how the Nursery school has handled your complaint, you can contact North Northamptonshire County Council or the Secretary of State at the Department for Education.

You can also access the online form: www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

Any parent/carers may contact Ofsted at any stage of the process via their website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Safeguarding

If a complaint indicates any safeguarding implications, it will be reported to North Northamptonshire Council or to Ofsted as appropriate in the circumstances.

Vexatious Complainants

Persistent and unreasonable Complainants (and/or anyone acting on their behalf) may be deemed to be a 'vexatious complainant' where:

- They persist in pursuing a complaint when the complaints process has been properly implemented and exhausted
- They change the substance of their complaint or continually raise new issues or further concerns.
- They are unwilling to accept documented evidence as being factual or deny receipt of an adequate response despite correspondence specifically answering their questions or do not accept that facts can sometimes be difficult to verify when a long period of time has elapsed.
- They do not clearly identify the precise issues which they wish to be investigated, despite reasonable efforts of staff, or focus on a trivial matter to an extent that it is out of proportion to its significance and continue to focus on this point.
- They have been verbally abusive or threatening towards a staff member or they are continually disrespectful or derogatory to other stakeholders.
- They display unreasonable demands or expectations and fail to accept that these may be unreasonable.

Where we categorise a customer as a 'vexatious complainant', we may refuse them access to our complaints process. We will advise any customer where we are considering this categorisation, providing them with an opportunity to address their behaviour and an action plan for how we will manage their contact should their behaviour continue. If we believe there is an underlying health issue driving the behaviour we will work with other agencies and organisations who may be able to offer appropriate support to the customer.

Records of complaints

Letters of complaints and records will be kept on file. Complaints will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body as part of the head teacher's report.