

Beams of Light Complaints Procedure

Policy statement

Beams of Light believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and careful attention to their needs and requests. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our centre and will review and look into any concerns about the running of the service. 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 service to an acceptable conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Procedures

Beams of Light are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage 2 and above and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with the Centre Manager. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complaints against the after school staff should be made in the first instance to Anita Pillay (Centre Manager) via email: bpbeamsoflight@hotmail.com or by letter, addressed to The Merlin School, FAO After School Care Manager. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to allow complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure.

Anonymous complaints

We will not generally investigate anonymous complaints. However, if appropriate, the manager will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Beams of Light wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled another way or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- a responsibility to review Beams of Light After School Care policies, in light of the complaint
- an apology.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the centre's provision talks over, first of all, their concerns with the centre 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 centre manager.

- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.
- The centre holds written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the centre manager may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the centre manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the centre manager. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the manager should have the support of a legal representative present.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made, as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the 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 centre manager are not able to reach an 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 Learning Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.

- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the centre manager 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 s/he gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent and the centre manager 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.
- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the centre's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is: **0300 123 1231**
- If a child appears to be at risk, our centre follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and centre are informed and the centre manager 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 centre 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 Complaint Investigation Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to: