

**The Meadows Montessori School
Complaints Procedure**

Informal Complaints

- The Head Teacher and staff should normally deal with specific complaints in an informal manner - aiming to resolve them quickly, sensitively and to the satisfaction of the complainant.

Formal Complaints

Guiding Principles:

- All complaints are dealt with promptly, effectively, and professionally.
- Complainants are kept informed of progress at all stages of the procedure.
- The aim is to ensure that the complaint is settled or that a decision is taken to proceed onto the next stage of the procedure.
- At each stage full written records must be kept for guidance of those who may need to consider the complaint at a further stage.
- Interviews with staff which are carried out as part of the formal complaints procedure must be conducted on the understanding that the staff have the right, if they wish, to be accompanied by a representative or a friend.

Procedudure

- All complaints must be in writing and referred in the first instance to the Head Teacher for investigation.

Investigating Complaints

The Head Teacher should:

- Establish the facts about what has happened so far and who has been involved.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
- Discuss with the complainant(s) what they feel would put things right.
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those who complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- Conduct any interview with an open mind.
- Keep notes of any interview for record - ensuring that all papers have the date and time of interview written clearly on them and that they are signed by all staff present. If felt necessary, ask a separate 'note taker' to assist.

Resolving Complaints

At each stage of the procedure efforts must be made to continually be aware of ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology (written and/or verbal)
- An explanation (as above)
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An undertaking of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again.

It may also be the case that the complaint may not have any substance and is therefore considered to be unfounded or unsubstantiated.

Timescale

The school will make every effort to respond fully to a written complaint within 5 school days. Where this proves unrealistic the school will inform the complainant in writing and give some estimate of how long it will take to provide a detailed response.

Further Investigation

If the complainant wishes the matter to be considered further the following procedure should be followed:

- A hearing should be arranged before a panel of at least 3 people who were not directly involved in the previous consideration of the complaint.
- The panel is to be formed by 2 staff members and one person who is independent of management and running of the school. This person is to be appointed by the proprietor of the school.
- The person appointed who is independent is Mrs Carolyn McNeill, Owner / Manager of Chives Montessori Nursery 01473-212448
- The above panel must be in place within 20 days of the complaint being made - providing adequate notice of the hearing to the panel and the complainant.
- The hearing will allow the panel to make findings and recommendations and also to ensure that all parties are given a copy of any findings and recommendations.
- Written records must be kept of all complaints and their outcomes, regardless of whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, when a complaint is submitted in writing or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.
- All correspondence statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential and in the locked filing cabinet. These will be made available to the HMI/ISI when they inspect the school. Copies will also be made available to the Registration Authority on request.

Signed:

Date:

Review Date: