

Our Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

At the Little Learners Montessori we are committed to providing a consistently safe, stimulating, and accessible service to children and their parents/carers. However, we understand that sometimes things don't go quite as intended and it is for this reason why we view complaints as an opportunity to learn and a chance to put things right.

The aim of our complaint's policy is to provide a clear procedure that can be used by anyone wishing to make a complaint. We will also use this complaints procedure to monitor the quality of the service we provide. This policy does not extend to staff as they should refer to our internal complaints process.

All our staff and members of our Higher Management are required to read, understand, and comply with this complaints policy and its procedures. We are committed to handling all complaints in a timely and sensitive manner, with an overall aim of obtaining a resolution and repairing relationships. To achieve this, we will:

- Listen sensitively to all complaints
- Treat complaints confidentially
- Objectively and fully investigate all complaints within the timelines stipulated in this policy
- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any remedial action that will be taken

What is a complaint?

We consider a complaint to be any verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction regarding any aspect of our business; this encompasses our staff, premises and or the service we provide.

A complaint can be made where an individual feels the Little Learners Montessori has:

- Failed to provide an acceptable standard of service or made an error in how the service was provided
- Acted in an unfair or discriminatory manner
- Acted in an improper manner

Complaints Procedure

Our Complaints procedure is set out in the following four stages:

Stage One

Informal Resolution

In cases where an individual has an informal concern regarding our service, staff, or premises, we ask that they immediately notify a member of our staff or the branch manager to allow for the concern to be dealt with quickly and the concerns rectified. If

the resolution is deemed unsatisfactory, then a complaint can be raised following the formal stages of this procedure.

Stage Two

The Complaint

Complaints can be received from anyone including parents, carers, volunteers, or the public. Complaints can be lodged in writing via email or post, verbally via the telephone or in person, and should detail the nature of the complaint, the date of the event/incident, any witnesses and or evidence and how they wish it to be resolved.

Written complaints may be sent to:

Email: accounts@thelittlelearners.co.uk

or

Post: The Little Learners Montessori, 62-78 Merton Road, Watford, WD18 0WY

Verbal complaints may be made by:

Telephone: 01923 804488

or

In person: at any of our branches or the Head Office's address listed above.

Where the complaint is received verbally, the staff member receiving the complaint will:

- Record in writing, via the Incident Form, the facts of the complaint and include the complainant's name, contact details (including telephone number and email address) and their relationship to the Little Learners Montessori.
- Provide the complainant with our complaint's policy and procedure.
- Explain the next stage and timeline.

All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within five working days by the person handling the complaint. The acknowledgment will detail the complaint handler's details which include their position and contact details, and when the complainant can expect a response to their complaint; a copy of the complaint's procedure will be attached. Complaints will usually receive a response within two weeks of receipt.

Stage Three

The Investigation

All complaints will be dealt with by a manager, or a member of Higher Management if the complaint relates to a manager. If it is necessary to meet with the complainant as part of the investigation process, we will aim to do so within seven days of receiving the complaint.

We aim to fully investigate complaints and provide the complainant with a response in writing within two weeks. In instances where, due to the complex nature of the

complaint, the investigation will take longer than two weeks, a progress report will be sent to the complainant with an expected resolution date.

The response to the complaint will detail the findings, and outcome. These are the following possible outcomes:

- The evidence indicates that the complaint was substantiated and therefore upheld.
- The complaint was substantiated in part and that part upheld.
- The complaint is not substantiated by the evidence and therefore not upheld.

Where the complaint is upheld, an apology will be offered along with any recommendations and remedies to be taken, unless doing so would breach confidentiality. In some instances, it may be necessary for the outcome to be communicated with the complainant in person. If this is necessary, the complainant will be notified of this in writing.

Stage Four

Appeal

The response letter will also inform the complainant that, if they are not satisfied with the complaint outcome, they can request that it be reviewed by a member of Higher Management. The response letter will provide details of who to contact within Higher Management and the timescales to do so. The designated member of Higher Management will aim to respond to the appeal request within five working days of its receipt.

If after the involvement of Higher Management, the complainant is still not satisfied, they should contact OFSTED:

The National Business Unit
Ofsted
The Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square, Manchester
M2 7LA
Telephone 0300 123 4666