



Hylton Red House Nursery School Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

Our Core Values

Integrity	Independence	Responsibility	Enjoyment	Achievement	Partnerships	Inspirational
-----------	--------------	----------------	-----------	-------------	--------------	---------------

Our Vision

We aim to ensure everyone is inspired to achieve, enjoy and develop together. Through a safe, stimulating, child-centred environment we can build strong partnerships with families and the wider community.

Equality and Diversity

At Hylton Red House Nursery School, we value and respect the diversity of individuals, our local community and the wider world. We seek to recognise our differences, to understand the needs of people within the groups identified as having protected characteristics and to ensure no one is treated less favourably through our policies and practices. The nursery upholds the values at the heart of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and places them at the centre of our planning, policies, practice and ethos. Hylton Red House Nursery School is committed to supporting children with SEND. Our dedicated team work together to provide the support needed for children with SEND.

The fundamental British values embedded within the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum are upheld in all we do. Hylton Red House Nursery School seeks to protect children from, and build resilience to, radicalisation and extremist views.

Rationale

Our Nursery believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. 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 setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Introduction

This policy has been updated with regard to current legislation and the DfE guidance document 'Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016'.

Compliments and Comments

We welcome your feedback and are continuously seeking to improve our practice. We frequently send out questionnaires and surveys in order to gather opinions on a number of topics. However, you are welcome to provide feedback at any time. We have a comments box in the main entrance, or you can speak to a member of staff to convey your thoughts.

Statutory Review Frequency: Every Two Years

Approved by: Full Governing Body



Hylton Red House Nursery School Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

There are a number of opportunities throughout the year to share your thoughts with us regarding your child's experience of nursery but also of the running of the nursery in general:

- Every day, on arrival and departure
- New Starters meetings
- Home Visits
- Parent Sessions each term
- Additional meetings upon request
- Questionnaires and Surveys
- Information Leaflets and newsletters
- Our website
- Stay and play sessions and activity days

Concerns and Complaints

Concerns are informal, and when expressed may be taken seriously at the earliest stage. Concerns are handled without the need for formal procedures wherever possible. If a concern cannot be resolved, it may then go on to become a formal *complaint*. Formal complaints should always follow the complaints procedure.

Some complaints fall outside the school's complaints procedure, for example, staff grievances or disciplinary procedures and these will be dealt with accordingly (See Appendix 3). If you have a concern or complaint about a third party provider, please request a copy of their complaints procedure from the nursery staff.

We recognise that mishaps do occur, matters can be overlooked, belongings can be mislaid, communication can sometimes be mis-interpreted and messages forgotten so it is enormously important that parents feel that they are genuinely and positively welcomed to share their concerns, and that their views will be acted upon.

Complaints Procedure

We adopt the local authority model complaints procedure (Appendix 1), but this has been tailored to our own school (Appendix 2).

Concerns and complaints will be dealt with as soon as possible, and you will be informed of time limits at each stage of the procedure. We expect concerns and complaints to be shared within acceptable timeframes.

Complaints from parents of children with SEND (Special Educational needs or Disabilities)

Parents / Carers are advised to follow the school complaints procedure (Appendix 2) - with Stage 1 being informal conversation with your child's key person. Additionally, you may ask to speak with the SENDCO - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator. There is a SENCO in every school and they are responsible for coordinating provision for children with SEN. This is the best person to talk to if your concerns are relating to the support the school provides. If you are still unhappy, you should talk to the Headteacher (Stage 2).

Recording Complaints

Statutory Review Frequency: Every Two Years

Approved by: Full Governing Body



Hylton Red House Nursery School Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing.

In order to prevent any later challenge or disagreement over what was said, brief notes of meetings and telephone calls will be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record. Where there are communication difficulties, we may use recording devices to ensure the complainant is able to access and review the discussions at a later point.

Copies of written complaints are kept with the child's records, as well as in our Compliments, Comments and Complaints File.

We will record the progress of the complaint and the final outcome. The Head teacher is responsible for these records and holds them centrally.

You have a right to request copies of these records under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

Resolving complaints

The following can be used in an attempt to resolve a complaint if it is found to be appropriate:

- An acknowledgement that the complaint was justified - this can include an outcome of upheld or partially upheld. Please note that unjustified complaint outcomes will be not upheld or unable to substantiate.
- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled better or differently
- An assurance that the reason for the complaint will not recur
- An explanation of the steps taken to ensure there will be no recurrence
- An undertaking to review a school policy or procedure as a result of the outcome of a complaint

You will be encouraged to state what you feel may resolve the problem.

Escalation of complaints following Stage 5

Should you remain dissatisfied following a Stage 5 complaint you will be advised of your right to escalate your complaint to the following bodies:

Local Authority

The Local Authority MAY consider complaints in relation to school admissions & allocations, school transport, some aspects of Special Educational Needs, school exclusions, non-delivery of the curriculum, religious worship and tuition at home.

Children's Services Complaints & Feedback Manager

Commercial & Corporate Services

Civic Centre

Sunderland, SR2 7DN

Telephone: 0191 5611276

Email: children.complaints@sunderland.gov.uk

Secretary of State for Education

Statutory Review Frequency: Every Two Years

Approved by: Full Governing Body



Hylton Red House Nursery School Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

The School Complaints Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to LA maintained schools in England on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Further information can be obtained from the SCU by calling the National Helpline on **0370 000 2288** or going online at:

www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

or by writing to:

Department for Education School Complaints Unit 2nd Floor,
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Review of Policy and Procedures

Complaints will not be shared with the whole governing body, except in very general terms, in case an appeal panel needs to be organised.

It is the governing body which determines how often the complaints procedure is reviewed (every two years). The next review of DfE advice is expected before January 2018 - subject to any relevant changes in legislation.

Unreasonable Complaints

Although we would always seek to ensure that any concerns and complaints are followed up to the satisfaction of both parties, upon occasion complaints may be deemed to be 'serial' or 'unreasonable'. In such case, we would follow best practice advice within the DfE guidance.

Consultation

- Staff
- Pupils
- Parents
- Governors
- External advisers

External Sources and References

- Sunderland City Council Advice 'School - Complaints Procedure'
<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=673>
- 'Complain about a school or childminder'
<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>
- 'Dealing with vexatious requests', Information Commissioner's Office
<https://ico.org.uk/media/1198/dealing-with-vexatious-requests.pdf>

Links to Other Documents

This policy is written with due regard to the following legislation:

- Section 29 of the Education Act 2002
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/29>

Statutory Review Frequency: Every Two Years

Approved by: Full Governing Body



Hylton Red House Nursery School Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

- “Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016: Departmental advice for maintained schools, maintained nursery schools and local authorities”
DfE, January 2016
- ‘Understanding and Dealing with Issues Relating to Parental Responsibility’
DfE January 2016
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/489901/Parental_Responsibility_Advice_for_School_January_2016.pdf

Date of policy update: May 2016

Approved by:

Signed by Chair: _____

Date for Review: May 2018

Appendix 1: Sunderland City Council Complaints Procedure

Step 1 - Informal Discussion with the School

It is always useful to talk through your complaint with the person responsible, either by telephone or face to face. The school may request that you make an appointment, as this will ensure they can listen to your concerns fully and allocate an appropriate amount of time.

In a primary school the person to contact may be your child's class teacher. In a secondary school you may contact the form tutor or head of year.

Step 2 - Formal Complaint to the Head teacher

You will be asked to confirm the complaint in writing to the head teacher (or chair of governors if the complaint is about the head teacher) and it will be acknowledged in writing.

The Head teacher will then look into the complaint and contact you when it has been investigated.

Step 3 - Complaint to the Governing Body

The next step would be to make a formal complaint to the governing body. You should contact the school's Chair of Governors by letter and you may wish to send him or her a copy of your original letter as well as giving a reason for your unhappiness.

Letters should be sent to the Chair of School, c/o Governor Support Team (see contacts to the right of this page). Alternatively you can send a letter via the school.

The responsibility for dealing with your complaint lies with the school and its governing body. Children's Services will, however, investigate any complaints about schools, subject

Statutory Review Frequency: Every Two Years

Approved by: Full Governing Body



Hylton Red House Nursery School Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

to the governing body's approval, involving allegations of gross misconduct or illegal actions and in the following areas:

- The school curriculum
- Collective worship and religious education and the provision of information required by law
- Appeals about admissions
- Appeals about exclusions
- Appeals about assessments and statements of special educational needs



Hylton Red House Nursery School Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

Appendix 2: Hylton Red House Nursery School Complaints Procedure

Please see page 15 of DfE 'Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016' for Roles and Responsibilities

Stage 1 - Informal Discussion with the School

Inform your child's Key Worker of your concerns either by telephone or face to face. If it is felt that your concerns require an appointment to be made, this will be arranged at a mutually suitable time. This will ensure we can listen to your concerns fully and allocate an appropriate amount of time. We will ask you what you think will resolve the issue.

If that member of staff does not feel comfortable investigating the complaint, or the complaint is about that staff member then it will immediately escalate the complaint to Stage 2.

Stage 2 - Discussion with Head teacher

During this stage the Head Teacher can delegate the task of collating evidence and information relating to the concern but the decision on any action to be taken as a result of the concern and the response will come from the Head Teacher, within agreed timescales.

Stage 3 - Formal Complaint to the Head teacher

You will be asked to confirm the complaint in writing to the Head teacher (or Chair of governors if the complaint is about the Head teacher) and it will be acknowledged in writing.

The Head teacher will then look into the complaint and contact you when it has been investigated, within agreed timescales.

Stage 4 - Complaint heard by Chair of Governors

If you are not satisfied with the response of the Head teacher or the complaint is about the Head teacher, you should write to the Chair of Governors to request that your complaint is considered further, within agreed timescales.

Stage 5 - Complaint heard by Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel

The next step would be to make a formal complaint to the governing body. You should contact the school's Chair of Governors by letter and request an Appeals Panel consider your complaint, within agreed timescales.

Letters should be sent to the Chair of School, c/o Governor Support Team (see contact below). Alternatively you can send a letter via the school.

5.1 The Chair, or a nominated governor, will then convene a Governing Body complaints panel.

5.2 The Governing Body Complaints Panel should consist of 3 to 5 governors and will **not** include all of the school's governors. This is so impartiality may not be compromised in case a panel is then required for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff as a result of a complaint.

5.3 One of the governors will be appointed as the Chair of the Complaints Panel. This does not necessarily have to be the Chair of Governors.

Statutory Review Frequency: Every Two Years

Approved by: Full Governing Body



Hylton Red House Nursery School

Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

5.4 The role of the Chair will include:

- Ensuring that the correct process has been followed
- The remit of the panel is explained to each party at the beginning of the proceedings - i.e. that all parties will have the opportunity to have their say without being interrupted
- That all issues are fully addressed
- Ensure that complainants are put at ease and do not feel intimidated
- Ensure the hearing is conducted informally and that all parties treat each other with courtesy and respect
- The panel is open minded and acts independently
- No panel member has had any previous involvement in the complaint
- All parties are given the opportunity to see any written documentation and to comment on it.

The Chair should also ensure that the complainant is informed of the Panel's decision, in writing, within 15 working days of the Panel hearing. This letter should inform the complainant of their right of appeal should they remain dissatisfied (i.e. Ofsted or The Secretary of State for Education).

The panel hearing should be held in private and the aim should be to resolve the complaint, achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant and assure the complainant that his/her concerns have been taken seriously.

The Complaints Panel should aim to reach an outcome in respect of the complaint (i.e. upheld, partially upheld, not upheld, unable to substantiate), decide and agree on appropriate action to be taken as a result of the complaint and make recommendations to change processes/procedures to ensure problems of a similar nature do not recur.

A clerk to the panel should be appointed (this could be another member of staff). The clerk will be responsible for the following:

- Arranging the time, date and venue for the hearing
- Collating and distributing any written information, including details of the previous stages of the complaint, to all parties in advance of the hearing
- Meeting and welcoming the parties as they arrive
- Notifying all relevant parties of the panel's decision

If the whole governing body is aware of the substance of a complaint before the final stage has been completed, we will arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint. This may be a different school, or the Governor Support team at the LA.

N.B: Complaints about the Headteacher will proceed directly to Stage 4, and a complaint against a member of the Governing Body will be made directly to the clerk of the governing body, c/o Governor Support Team. Alternatively you can send a letter via the school.

- **Governor Support Team**
Tel: 0191 561 2781
Email: governor@sunderland.gov.uk

Statutory Review Frequency: Every Two Years
Approved by: Full Governing Body



Hylton Red House Nursery School Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

Appendix 3: Exceptions to Complaints Procedure

Our complaints procedure covers all complaints about provision of facilities or services that we provide with the exceptions listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures.

Exceptions	Who to Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). For school admissions, it will depend on who is the admission authority (either the school or the LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures 	<p>These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities. 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.</p>



Hylton Red House Nursery School Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

Appendix 4: Example Complaints Record

DATE	NAME OF PERSON RAISING CONCERN	NAME OF CHILD (IF RELEVANT)	DETAILS	ACTION TAKEN

Appendix 5: Example Complaints Form

DATE:	
NAME OF PERSON RAISING CONCERN	
NAME OF CHILD (IF RELEVANT)	
NAME OF PERSON RECEIVING CONCERN	

STAGE 1 / STAGE 2
DETAILS OF CONCERN: (ATTACH COPY OF ANY WRITTEN COMMUNICATION)
REPORTED TO:
FOLLOW UP:
STAGE 3
DETAILS OF COMPLAINT AND ACTION TAKEN SO FAR: (Attach copy of any written communication)
REASONS WHY COMPLAINANT IS STILL DISSATISFIED:
ACTION TAKEN BY HEAD TEACHER:
RESOLUTION / FURTHER ACTIONS: