



## Complaints Policy

At Creative Stars, we are committed to providing the best education and care for our children and in doing so we recognise the importance of establishing and maintaining good relationships with parents, carers and the wider community. We are aware that there may be occasions where people have concerns or complaints and we would ask that any such issues are brought to our attention to be addressed as quickly as possible.

Not all concerns are complaints. A concern is an issue raised by a parent, child, staff member or other person that is resolved quickly and informally. Most concerns can be resolved by the person to whom the concern is addressed in an informal manner.

We would encourage any parent / carer who has not received a satisfactory response at this point to ask for an appointment with the Managing Director. Ideally, no concern should become a formal complaint.

Occasionally, a concern may be too serious to be handled in this way, perhaps needing greater investigation; or the person concerned may feel that the answers provided have not been acceptable or adequate. In such circumstances the concern may become a complaint. This document outlines the procedure that should be followed in such cases.

**General Principles** To allow for a proper investigation, complaints should be brought to the attention of the Managing Director as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event being complained of will not be considered.

An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**Procedures** There are four potential stages to the complaint's procedure:

Stage 1	Informal complaint heard by staff member
Stage 2	Formal complaint heard by Managing Director
Stage 3	Formal complaint referred again to Managing Director
Stage 4	Formal complaint to Ofsted

### 1) Informal Stage

The complainant is normally expected to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by telephone, e-mail or in person by appointment. Many issues can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.

It may be appropriate for serious concerns to be addressed to the Manager. In these cases, every effort will be made to resolve the situation informally. Any unreasonable refusal to attempt an informal resolution may result in the procedure being terminated forthwith.

### 2) Formal Stage by Managing Director

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage the complainant must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Managing Director, who will be responsible for its investigation. The complainant should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.



Where the nursery receives a formal complaint, it should be acknowledged within 24 hours and a commitment made that the complaint will be investigated, and the outcome of the investigation notified to the complainant within a working week.

The member of staff against whom the complaint has been received, should be notified that a complaint has been received, provided with a copy of the complaint and be informed that an investigation will be carried out.

It is essential that there is a clear understanding of the complaint. Where necessary, the Managing Director may meet with the complainant to clarify the complaint, the complainant may wish to be accompanied by a friend at this meeting. It might also be possible for the complaint to be resolved at this time.

The Managing Director will collect such other evidence as is deemed necessary. Where this involves an interview with a member of staff, who is the subject of the complaint, that member of staff may be accompanied by a friend or a professional body representative if they wish.

Where children are potential witnesses, discretion should be exercised over their involvement. Only in extreme circumstances will children be interviewed.

The investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, the complainant, and the member of staff concerned, will be informed in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Some details may then be given of action the nursery may be taking to review procedures, but details of the investigation or of any disciplinary procedures will not be released
- The matter has been fully investigated and that appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential (e.g. where staff disciplinary procedures are being followed). The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the manager is now concluded.

### 3) Formal Stage referred again to Managing Director / against Managing Director

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Managing Director, or the complaint is about the Manager, the complainant should write to the Managing Director to request that their complaint be considered further OR to the Deputy Manager if the complaint is about the Managing Director. Such a request must be made in writing within 2 weeks of receiving notice of the outcome from the Managing Director, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure.

If the complainant considers that the decision of the Managing Director is wrong, or that the Managing Director has acted unreasonably in considering the complaint, then the complainant may bring a complaint against the Managing Director. This will provide an opportunity for the evidence to support such a complaint to be investigated. The Managing Director / Deputy Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 24 hours and notify the complainant within 5 days of the outcome.

The complainant should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, copies of relevant documents etc. In addition, the complainant will be invited to meet with the Managing Director / Deputy Manager to present oral evidence or to clarify the complaint. If the complaint is about the Managing Director, the complainant can meet with the Deputy Manager regarding the complaint. The complainant may wish to be accompanied by a friend at this meeting.



The Managing Director / Deputy Manager will collect such other evidence as is deemed necessary. This may include the interviewing of witnesses and others who may provide relevant information.

Once there has been an opportunity for this to be considered, the Manager will be invited to meet separately with the Managing Director, in order to present written and oral evidence in response. The Manager may be accompanied at this meeting by a friend or professional body representative.

When the investigation has been concluded, the complainant and the Manager will be informed in writing of the outcome. The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Managing Director is now concluded.

#### 4) Formal Stage to Ofsted

If the complainant is not satisfied with the how the process has been followed or considers that the decision of the Managing Director wrongful, then the final step would be to make a complaint to Ofsted.

**This policy was reviewed on: 15.08.23**

**Date of next review: 15.08.24**