Complaints Procedure

Policy statement

We at Belfield Montessori believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of Belfield. 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 good conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Procedures

All settings are required to keep a written record ('summary log') 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. A full procedure is set out in the Pre-school Learning Alliance publication *Complaint Investigation Record* which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

All Parents are aware of how to complain, if a parent wants to complain to Ofsted, the telephone number is displayed in the Reception.

Ofsted Tel. Number – 0300 123 1231or via email – enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a Concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with Management.
- Complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2 – <u>We Contact Ofsted and other agencies/government bodies (Mash, Lado) when appropriate (formal complaint)</u>

- 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 Manager and the owner (Director).
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints, the form is to be completed with our Manager and signed by the parent.

- We store written Complaints from parents in the Child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Manager and the Director store all information relating to the investigation in a file designated for this complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the manager and the Director 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 Manager and the Director. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the Manager should have the Deputy Manager and the Director 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 setting cannot reach 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.
- The Advisory Teacher from London Borough of Barnet is the appropriate person to be invited to act as mediator.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. She can hold separate meetings with our Management and the Director 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 she gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the settings Management and Director 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.

Ofsted and London Borough of Barnet – Children's Services

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting'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**
- These details are displayed in the Reception.
- If a child appears to be at risk, Belfield Montessori follows the procedures (Safeguarding Procedure)
- In these cases, both the parent and our setting are informed and our Manager and Director work with Ofsted to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- At Belfield Montessori Day Nursery, we take privacy very seriously and we are currently updating all our records to ensure that we are fully meeting the new data protection standards (General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- We are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
- A record of complaints against our setting and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept for 6 years, 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.