



Making a Complaint Policy

Policy statement

We 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 the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach with 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 the parties involved.

SEND & Safeguarding Context

Many of the children attending Ohana have SEND, neurodevelopmental differences or communication needs. This means:

- Parents may require more detailed explanations or evidence as part of a complaint.
- Some complaints may relate to unmet needs, emotional regulation, therapy, staffing ratios or SEN provision.
- Staff must remain sensitive, non-defensive and supportive throughout the process.
- Any complaint that signals a **safeguarding concern**, including a concern about staff behaviour, communication failures or the welfare of a SEND child, must be escalated to the **DSL immediately**, alongside following this procedure.

This ensures alignment with the Safeguarding Policy and Ofsted expectations.

Procedures

All settings are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two 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 Complaint Investigation Record which acts as the “summary log” for this purpose.

How SEND-Related Complaints Are Handled

For complaints involving SEN provision, therapy, behaviour support, or reasonable adjustments:

- The **SENCO** will be consulted and may attend meetings with the parent.
- Evidence such as IEPs, SALT/OT guidance, behaviour logs and regulation plans may be reviewed.
- The child's voice (including non-verbal communication) will be considered where appropriate.
- A multi-agency approach may be required for complex SEND complaints.

This ensures SEND compliance and transparency.

Making a complaint — Stage 1

- *Any parent who has a concern... talks over concerns with our manager first.*
 - *Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.*
 - *We record the issue and how it was resolved in the child's file.*
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Where appropriate, the manager may:

- Involve the SENCO or Deputy Manager
 - Review any relevant SEND documentation
 - Offer additional communication formats (written, voice note, visual explanation) for parents who need support
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Stage 2

- *If this does not have a satisfactory outcome... parent moves to this stage by putting concerns in writing.*
- *Template form available... may be completed by manager.*
- *Written complaints stored in child's personal file or separate investigation file.*
- *Manager meets parent to discuss outcome.*
- *We inform parents of outcome within 28 days.*

- *When resolved, we log the summary points in the Complaint Investigation Record.*
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Safeguarding Integration at Stage 2

If the complaint relates to:

- Staff behaviour
- Alleged harm to a child
- Failure to follow safeguarding procedures
- Unsafe practice or supervision issues
- Any incident that may compromise a child's welfare

...the complaint must be handled under **Safeguarding procedures**, not just the Complaints Policy.

Ofsted may need to be notified by the DSL without delay.

Stage 3

Parent meets with manager and Managing Director... signed record... procedure concluded when resolved.

For SEND-related complaints, the SENCO should attend Stage 3 meetings unless the parent requests otherwise.

Stage 4 & 5 — External Mediation and Final Decision

- *External mediator may be invited... keeps all discussions confidential.*
 - *A final meeting is held to reach a decision using mediator's advice.*
 - *A record is made and signed by all present.*
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Escalation for Serious SEND or Welfare Concerns

For complaints involving:

- Repeated unmet needs
- Failure to provide reasonable adjustments

- Inconsistency in therapy provision
- Significant disputes with the Local Authority for children with EHCPs

The management may:

- Request involvement from Early Help
- Liaise with LA SEND Caseworkers
- Conduct an internal review of staffing or environment
- Commission external professional advice

Role of Ofsted, LSCB / local safeguarding partners, and the ICO

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaint's 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.
- Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at: Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD Tel: 0300 123 1231
- These details are displayed on our setting notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, we follow the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board or local safeguarding partners.
- In these cases, both the parent and our setting are informed, and our manager works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board or local safeguarding partners to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if you have made a complaint about the way your data is being handled and remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us. For further information about how we handle your data, please refer to the Privacy Notice given to you when you registered your child at our setting. The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

How We Support Parents Making a Complaint

We recognise that neurodivergent parents or parents of SEND children may need:

- Extra time to process information
- Clear written summaries
- Visual explanations
- A translator or advocate
- Accessibility adjustments

Ohana will make reasonable adjustments to ensure all parents can engage with the complaints process fairly.

Records

A record of complaints is kept for 7 years... available for parents and Ofsted.

SEND & Complaints Data Monitoring

Complaints relating to SEND support, regulation strategies, behaviour, therapy or ratios will be:

- Analysed by Senior Leadership
- Reviewed termly with SENCO and DSL
- Used to improve practice and staff training

This strengthens governance and Ofsted compliance.

Policy Review & Sign-Off

- Original adoption: **4th November 2022**
- Last review: **8th December 2025**
- Reviewed By: Alba Arenas Martín
- Next review due: **November 2026** or earlier if statutory guidance changes.