

# Gloucester Nursery School



## Complaints Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020  
Review date: November 2025

## **A Mission Statement**

Staff at Gloucester Nursery School work with many children and families and have a wide range of information about them. The aim of this policy is to set out clearly for staff, parents/carers and external agencies how concerns and complaints are dealt with by Gloucester Nursery School.

### **1. Introduction**

Gloucester Nursery School is committed to providing a high quality service and achieving the highest standards of conduct. If there are times, when parents/carers feel that is not the case, the School's Senior Management Team needs to know, so that it can explore how to improve.

A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important, for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. The nursery takes informal concerns seriously and makes every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. Nonetheless, there are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, this formal procedure should be invoked through the stages outlined within it.

Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions). Schools must not limit complaints to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school.

### **2. Our Principles when Dealing with Complaints**

We aim to make sure that:

- If there is a need to complain, the process is as easy as possible
- Complaints are treated seriously however made
- Complaints are looked into impartially, thoroughly and fairly
- Complaints are dealt with honestly, promptly, politely and confidentially
- Complaints are responded to within a reasonable amount of time
- The response is relevant to the complaint
- The complainant is informed of the outcomes of any investigation and any action taken or to be taken
- Complainants get a full and clearly written reply to formal complaints within 28 working days and will be told what the nursery will do to put things right, if that is appropriate.

### **3. Definition and types of complaint**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the quality of services that are provided by the Gloucester Nursery School. The dissatisfaction may be with the provision, a piece of work carried out or a policy.

Examples of types of complaints:

- Inappropriate provision to meet a need
- Mistakes in administration or the provision of a service
- Failure to provide an agreed provision
- Discrimination against a service user
- Offence or upset caused by an employee of Gloucester Nursery School
- A policy disadvantaging a service user
- Issues arising out of the application of a policy.

### **4. Before Complaining**

Before a complaint is made, parents/carers are encouraged to raise any query and/or concern with the relevant member of staff. The vast amount of issues are dealt with informally in this manner.

### **5. Informal Complaints**

Should the issue not be dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant, they should raise it with the Headteacher at Gloucester Nursery School. They will look informally into the situation and communicate with the complainant. They will record the issue and its resolution.

### **6. Formal Complaints**

Should an informal complaint not resolve the issue, then a formal complaint may be made to the Headteacher. It may be done in person, by telephone, in writing or by email. If the Headteacher is the subject of the complaint, the Chair of the Board of Governors will complete this stage of the process.

The Headteacher will:

- Acknowledge receipt to written complaint within 7 days of receipt
- Formally investigate the complaint in detail and record the information in full
- Communicate the findings in writing within 28 days with an outcome
- If that is not possible, inform the complainant of the delay and the reasons for it
- Establish if the complainant is content with the outcome

At every stage of the procedure the complainant will be kept informed as to the progress. If a complaint is made by telephone, the Headteacher will complete the complaint form and forward it to the complainant to ensure accuracy. Further telephone conversations and any subsequent meetings, will be recorded and added to the file, stating dates and times.

If there is no resolution at the end of this stage, the Headteacher will ensure that the complaint is investigated further by a panel of two members of the nursery's Board of Governors. The nursery has an arrangement with the Foundations for Children Federation's Governing Body to provide governors to support and investigate complaints should further capacity be needed. This is a mutually agreed and offered by and for both parties. The appropriate panel will meet within one calendar month of the complaint being brought to their attention. The panel will hear the complaint, decide on its merits and make recommendations about its resolution. It will record its decision and any agreements reached. The nursery's staff members will be bound by the decision of the panel. The substance and outcome of any complaint, which is brought to such a panel will be reported to the Governing Body in full at the meeting which follows the panel's hearing of the complaint.

Any parent/carer may wish to contact Ofsted at any stage of the process:

Contact details: Tel: 0300 123 1231 E-mail: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) or in writing to:  
Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

If you are not happy with how the nursery school has handled your complaint, you can contact

West Northamptonshire Council or the Secretary of State for Education:

Contact: The Secretary of State, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, London SW1

You can also access the online form: [www.gov.uk/complain-about-school](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school)

Please be aware that neither the Secretary of State nor Ofsted are likely to investigate individual issues but they can inspect the school's policies and procedures and make sure these have been followed.

## **7. Safeguarding**

If a complaint indicates any safeguarding implication or if it is actually an allegation in respect of the conduct of one or more staff members, it will be reported to the relevant local authority or to Ofsted as appropriate to the circumstances.

## **8. Records of complaints and Timescales for Dealing with Complaints**

Letters of complaint and responses to them are kept on file along with any records of investigations of complaints and their outcomes.

Ideally, complaints should be dealt with quickly, but if your complaint is complicated or requires detailed investigation, it may take longer to sort out.

## 9. Monitoring complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually by the nursery's Governing Body.

## 10. Bias in the Proceedings

Complainants are entitled to a fair meeting or review. Anyone who has a conflict of interest should not take part in the complaints process. If there is any reasonable doubt as to a person's ability to act impartially, they should withdraw from considering the complaint. No one, when making decisions must act in a way that is biased.

If the complainants believe, the headteacher or governors will not consider their complaint impartially, they should contact the DfE and submit their evidence.

## 11. Complaints not covered by this Policy

Please note that some services we provide are covered under separate procedures, including those listed below.

**Admission to nursery** – complaints should be directed to the Headteacher and or Chair of Governors.

**School reorganisation proposals** – contact the local authority in the first instance and escalate to the Department for Education if dissatisfied.

**Statutory assessments of special education needs** – concerns about statutory assessments of special educational needs should be raised directly with the Headteacher.

**Matters likely to require a child protection investigation** – complaints about child protection matters should be handled

- under the nursery's child protection and safeguarding policy
- in accordance with relevant statutory guidance

Refer to the local authority designated officer (LADO) or the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

**Whistleblowing** – please refer to the nursery's whistleblowing policy.

Volunteers who have concerns about the nursery should complain through the nursery's complaints procedure. Depending on the substance of the complaint they may also be able to complain to:

- the local authority
- DfE using the form (<https://www.education.gov.uk/contactus>)

**Staff conduct complaints** – complaints about staff are dealt with under the school’s internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.

## 12. Reporting complaints to the Department for Education (DfE)

If having gone through the complaints procedure you are not happy with how the Nursery School has dealt with your complaint, please complete the DfE’s contact form (<https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe>).

Please ensure you complete the nursery’s complaints procedure first. However, the exceptions to this include when:

- children are at risk of harm
- children are missing education
- a complainant is being prevented from having their complaint progressed through the published complaints procedure
- there is evidence that the nursery is proposing to act or is acting unlawfully or unreasonably

## 13. Vexatious Complainants

Persistent and unreasonable complainants (and/or anyone acting on their behalf) may be deemed to be a “vexatious complainant” where:

- a person who persists in pursuing a complaint when the complaints process has been properly implemented and exhausted
- they change the substance of their complaint or continually raise new issues or further concerns
- they are unwilling to accept documented evidence as being factual or deny receipt of an adequate response despite correspondence specifically answering their questions or do not accept that facts can sometimes be difficult to verify when a long period of time has elapsed
- they do not clearly identify the precise issues which they wish to be investigated, despite reasonable efforts of staff, or focus on a trivial matter to an extent that it is out of proportion to its significance and continue to focus on this point
- they have been verbally abusive or threatening towards a staff member or they are continually disrespectful or derogatory to other staff
- they display unreasonable demands or expectations and fail to accept that these may be unreasonable.

Where we categorise a parent/carer as a “vexatious complainant”, we may refuse them access to our complaints procedure. We will advise any person where we are considering this categorisation, providing them with an opportunity to address their behaviour and an action plan for how we will manage their contact should their

behaviour continue. If we believe there is an underlying health issue driving the behaviour we will work with other agencies and organisations who may be able to offer appropriate support.

## GLOUCESTER NURSERY SCHOOL COMPLAINT FORM

Completed by:

<b>Complainant:</b>		<b>Child:</b>		<b>Area of Centre:</b>	
<b>How was complaint presented to the Nursery School?</b>		<b>Date:</b>		<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Details of Complaint</b>					
<b>What would the complainant like to happen to resolve complaint</b>					
<b>Details of investigation</b>					<b>Date(s)</b>
<b>Details of response to complainant</b>					<b>Date(s)</b>
<b>Is the complainant content with the response</b>					
<b>Any next steps</b>					

**Investigation and feedback by:**

**Name**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**