



Working in partnership with parents and other agencies procedures

10.2 Complaints Policy

***If you think a child is at risk, contact the Welwyn Hatfield children's social care team on 0300 123 4043 (including out of hours) or call the non-emergency police department on 101. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.**

Making a Complaint:

At Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of care and education. We also value strong partnerships with parents and carers. However, we recognise that from time to time, concerns may arise that require attention. We believe that all children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy, respect, and prompt attention to their needs. We welcome feedback and suggestions to improve our services and take all concerns seriously. Feedback can be provided verbally, in writing via email or by placing a comment in our parent suggestion box located on our front gate.

Informal Complaints:

We encourage parents and carers to first discuss any concerns directly with their child's key person or the setting manager. In most cases, we hope concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.

Formal Complaints Procedure:

If your concern is not resolved informally:

Submit a Formal Complaint: Submit your complaint to the setting manager verbally (Tel – 01438 840132) or in writing via email (acornwelwyn@gmail.com).

Acknowledgement: The complaint will be acknowledged by the setting manager within 2 business days.

Investigation: A thorough investigation will be carried out by the setting manager. A telephone or face to face meeting will be arranged with the parent/carer to discuss the outcome within 28 days. The meeting will be attended by the setting manager and another appropriate member of staff. A written record of the meeting will be recorded on our Complaints Record Form and signed by all persons present. The Complaints Record Form will be placed in the child's file and a summary recorded in our Complaints Investigation Record booklet.

If the Complaint Remains Unresolved: The complaint will be escalated by the setting manager to our trustee team. Appeals and complaints escalated to the trustee team will be responded to within 14 days.

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/carer will be advised of their right to contact Ofsted.

Right to Contact Ofsted:

At any stage, parents/carers may contact Ofsted using the contact details on the poster below. This poster is also displayed on our parent noticeboard.

Parents



Ofsted registers, regulates and inspects childcare for children aged from birth to 17 years.

Registered childcare providers and childminders have to meet requirements in the early years foundation stage statutory framework and/or the Childcare Register. These requirements relate to welfare and safety, the people providing the care and the organisation of the childcare. Childcarers registered on the Early Years Register, who care for children aged from birth until 31 August following a child's fifth birthday, also have to meet requirements for children's learning and development.

What you can tell us:

- Is the childcare good?
- Can it be made better?
- Do you have any concerns?

If you want to tell us anything about your child's childcare, you can write to us at:

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

**Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD**

If you have a concern or complaint, you can ring:

0300 123 4666

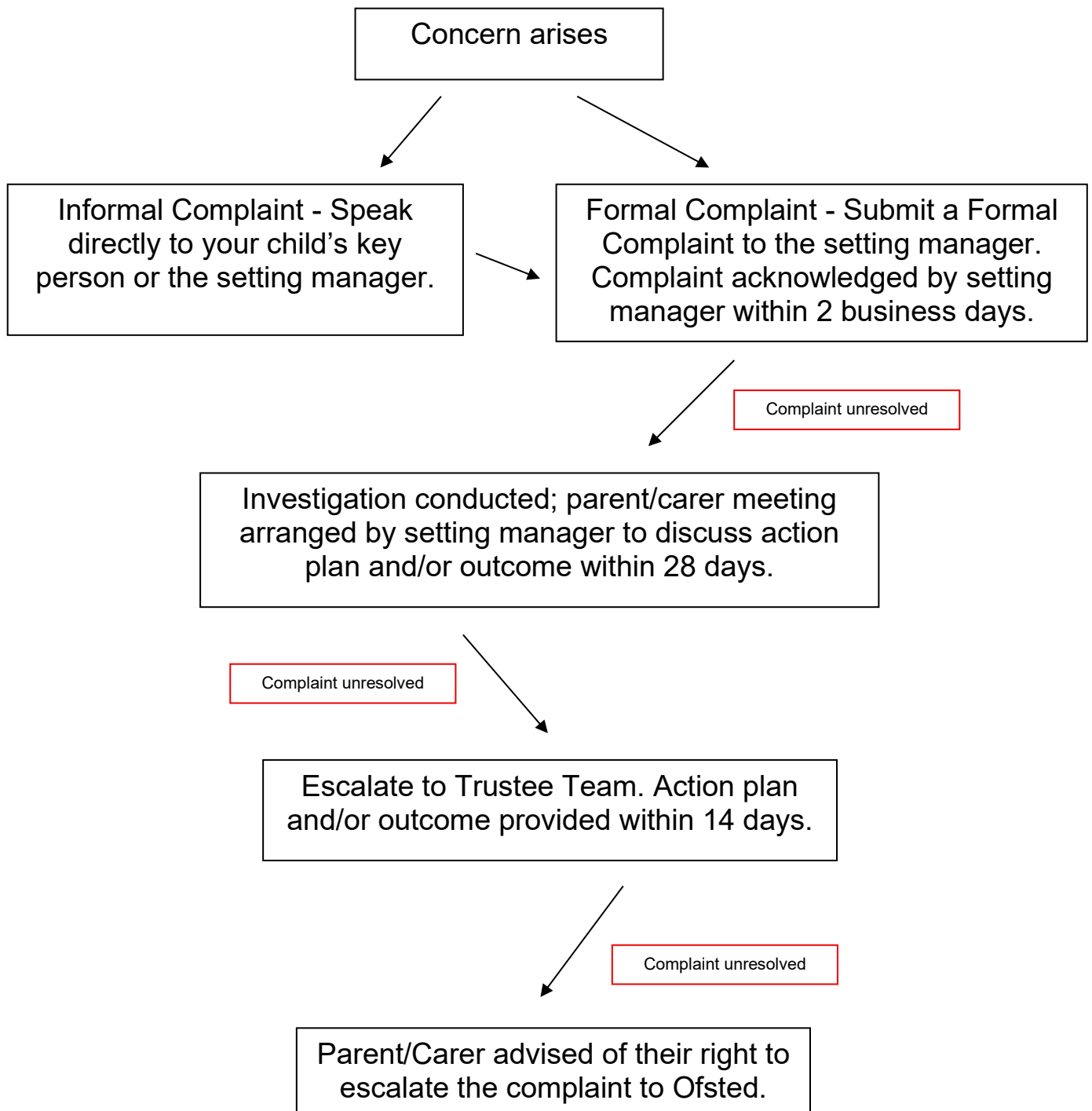
For more information, search for 'Guides for parents: how early years settings are inspected' or scan the QR code:



If you would like information about the availability of childcare in your local area, please visit **www.gov.uk/find-local-council** to find your local council.

Complaints Procedure

The outcome of all complaints is recorded and available to parents and Ofsted inspectors upon request.



If you think a child is at risk, contact Welwyn Hatfield Children's Social Care on 0300 123 4043, non-emergency police: 101, or emergency: 999.

Complaints Record

All formal complaints and their outcomes are recorded on a Complaints Record Form, a copy of which will be placed in the child's file. A summary of the complaint will be recorded in our Complaint Investigation Record booklet and retained for 3 years.

Complaints Involving Staff or Incidents

If a parent/carers wishes to raise a concern involving a member of staff or an incident:

- Speak to a staff member or setting manager with as much detail as possible.
- If discussed with a staff member, they will inform the setting manager immediately. A Complaints Record Form will be completed.
- The setting manager will acknowledge the complaint within 2 business days.
- An investigation will be conducted and an action plan developed, if necessary.
- All complaints will be recorded and securely filed.
- If a parent/carers prefers, they may write directly to the setting manager via email with the concern.

Duties as an Employer and Employee

As an employer, we have a duty of care to our staff. We are committed to:

- Providing support to any employee facing an allegation.
- Assigning a named contact if the staff member is suspended.
- Ensuring that any allegation is handled quickly, fairly, and in accordance with safeguarding guidelines, ensuring the safety of the child and support for the staff member.

Procedure for Serious Allegations Against a Member of Staff or Volunteer

In the event of an allegation of abuse against a staff member or volunteer, the following steps must be taken:

- Notify Setting Manager or trustee team immediately.
- Upon notification to the setting manager, they will advise the trustee team immediately and make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 1 working day via the LADO referral form on the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) website. <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/information-for-childcare-providers/providers/child-protection-and-lado-procedure.aspx#>
Referral form will be emailed directly to lado.referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk
- An initial response from LADO will be provided to the referee within 24 hours.
- Police Involvement: If the person presents an immediate risk or a criminal offence is suspected, the police will be contacted without delay.
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Informing the Accused:

- The individual should be informed of the allegation as soon as possible, following LADO and/or police guidance.
- Information will be shared only when appropriate and safe to do so.
- Consideration of Suspension will not be automatic. Alternative measures will be considered before any decision to suspend is made.

- The setting manager or a member of the trustee team will communicate with the staff member.

Strategy Discussion:

If there is reason to suspect significant harm to a child, a multi-agency strategy discussion will be convened, as per Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Internal Actions:

If police or social services are not involved, the LADO and Case Manager will agree on internal next steps, which may include:

- No further action
- Formal disciplinary action
- Termination of employment or service
- Further Investigation: If more information is needed, the LADO will determine who will lead the investigation and how it should be conducted.

Confidentiality

Throughout any complaint or allegation process, all information will be kept confidential and handled in accordance with data protection legislation. Only relevant parties will be informed.

This policy was adopted by Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school on 01 September 2025

Review: This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if required by legislation or changes in best practice.