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Play, Learn and Grow Together – Our Passion is Their Future

Address: St Helen's Pre-School, Beaumont Road, Costessey, Norwich, NR5 0HG

Email: [preschool.sthelens@gmail.com](mailto:preschool.sthelens@gmail.com)  
Email: [sthelens.manager@gmail.com](mailto:sthelens.manager@gmail.com)

Email: [sthelens.committee@gmail.com](mailto:sthelens.committee@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.sthelenspreschool.org](http://www.sthelenspreschool.org)

Phone No: 01603 749901

Ofsted No: 2548280

Charity No: 1036697

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## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### Policy Statement

St Helen's Pre-School is committed to delivering a safe, inclusive and high-quality early years provision where children, families and staff are treated with dignity and respect. We recognise that concerns and complaints may arise and view them as opportunities to reflect, strengthen practice and improve outcomes for children.

All concerns will be taken seriously and addressed promptly, fairly and transparently. Complaints will be managed in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework and relevant safeguarding and governance guidance.

Our intention is always to resolve concerns at the earliest stage possible while maintaining professional, constructive relationships with families.

### Complaints Procedure

Parents and carers may contact external agencies at any stage. However, we strongly encourage concerns to be raised with the setting first to enable prompt resolution.

#### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise concerns directly with the Manager as soon as possible. Early discussion allows for clarification, reflection and swift resolution.

The Manager will listen carefully, seek clarification where required and review relevant records or policies. Where appropriate, actions will be agreed to address the concern. The aim at this stage is to resolve matters proportionately and prevent escalation.

A written summary of the concern and agreed outcome will be recorded and stored securely. If the concern remains unresolved, the complainant may proceed to Stage 2.

#### Stage 2 – Formal Written Complaint

Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, or where the matter is of a serious nature, a formal complaint must be submitted in writing, via email or letter, to the Manager. The complaint should include clear details of the concern, relevant dates, individuals involved and any prior action taken.

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged as soon as possible and within five working days.

A thorough and impartial investigation will then be undertaken. This may include reviewing documentation, consulting relevant policies, speaking with staff or witnesses, and gathering additional evidence where necessary. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout.

In line with EYFS requirements, a written record of the complaint, investigation process, findings, outcome and any actions taken will be maintained in the Complaints Log (Appendix A).

A written response outlining the outcome of the investigation will be provided within 28 days of receipt. The response will clearly state whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld and detail any actions taken as a result.

### **Stage 3 – Committee Review**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a review by the Committee Chairperson.

A meeting will be arranged involving the complainant, the Manager and the Chairperson (or delegated committee representative). The purpose of the review is to ensure that the complaints procedure has been followed correctly, that the investigation has been thorough and fair, and to determine whether further action is required.

A formal written record of the meeting and agreed outcome will be completed and signed by those present. A copy will be provided to the complainant and stored securely. This concludes the setting's internal complaints procedure.

### **Stage 4 – External Agencies**

If the matter remains unresolved, parents and carers may contact:

Early Years Team (Local Authority)  
Telephone: 01603 222900

Ofsted  
Telephone: 0300 123 4666  
Website: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

Parents may contact Ofsted at any stage if they believe EYFS requirements are not being met or if children's welfare may be at risk.

## **Respectful Communication and Professional Standards**

St Helen's Pre-School is committed to maintaining a safe, calm and professional environment in which concerns can be raised and resolved appropriately.

Positive relationships between parents, staff and the committee are central to securing the best outcomes for children. All staff are expected to communicate with parents and carers in a respectful, fair and professional manner at all times. We expect the same standard of courtesy and respect in return.

## **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

We recognise that complaints can sometimes involve heightened emotions. However, for matters to be resolved effectively, communication must remain appropriate, focused and constructive. Behaviour that is abusive, threatening, discriminatory, intimidating or aggressive — whether in person, in writing, by telephone or online — compromises the safe and professional environment we are legally and ethically required to maintain.

Where conduct during the complaints process compromises safety, wellbeing or the effective operation of the setting, the Manager and Committee have a duty to take proportionate action. This may include structured meetings, setting clear communication boundaries, issuing written correspondence to clarify expectations, or, in serious or persistent cases, taking further action including the child's place being terminated.

Such measures are implemented only where necessary to safeguard children, staff and the integrity of the provision.

## **Safeguarding and Allegations**

Any complaint that raises safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the setting's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Where a complaint involves an allegation against a member of staff, volunteer or student, advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay. Such matters may require immediate referral and will not be investigated solely under this complaints procedure.

## **Funded Entitlement Complaints**

Concerns regarding the delivery of funded entitlement will be managed in line with the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance and recorded accordingly.

## **Recording, Confidentiality and Compliance**

A written record of all formal complaints will be retained for inspection as required under the EYFS. Records will detail the complaint, investigation process, outcome and actions taken. Complaints records are available to parents upon request and will be made available to Ofsted inspectors.

All information will be handled in accordance with GDPR and the setting's Confidentiality Policy.

## **Availability of the Policy**

This policy is shared as part of the enrolment process (Appendix B) and discussed during settling-in.

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes, to ensure continued compliance and effectiveness.

This policy has been adopted by St Helen's Pre-School

Signed on behalf of the setting by:

..... Chairperson

..... Manager

Date: February 2026

This policy runs in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Safer Recruitment
- Behaviour
- ICT
- Social Media
- Confidentiality
- Health and Safety
- Whistle Blowing
- First Aid
- Charging
- GDPR

## Relevant Guidance and Legislation

- Early education and childcare - Statutory guidance for local authorities  
[Early education and childcare \(applies from 1 April 2024\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (applies from 1 September 2021)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

**Appendices** – Please note appendices are held at the Pre-School, please ask to view

- A. Complaints Log
- B. Enrolment Pack