

Step by Step Day Nursery

Complaints Policy: We aim to provide an environment whereby parents feel able to discuss any issues which may arise with their children or staff members at the Nursery.

4.3 COMPLAINTS POLICY

In Step by Step Day Nursery it is of paramount importance that the Nursery should run smoothly, parents and staff work together in the spirit of co-operation for the children's best interest. In the event of complaints from parents, every effort will be made to respond quickly and appropriately.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Following Steps May Be Taken By Parents Who Have Concerns About A Child Or About The Running Of The Nursery:

1. In the case of matters needing further consideration, Parents should put their complaint in writing, and then they will have a meeting to discuss it with the Manager/Deputy. The Manager will look into it and work out an acceptable solution with the Parents.
2. If Parents feel that the Manager has not satisfactorily dealt with any issue, the proprietor will investigate their complaint in detail and endeavour to reach a satisfactory solution in the best interest of the children under our care.
3. If Parents feel that the Proprietor has still not satisfactorily dealt with any issue, Parents should contact **OFSTED**, with which the Nursery is registered, at the following address:

**Ofsted
Early Years
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M12WD**

4. Parents will receive a written reply to their complaint.
5. Complaints will be recorded and stored in the complaints folder.
6. After a complaint has been resolved the final outcome will be written in the complaints record.
7. Any recommendations for changes in procedure will be made and noted against the complaints policy. Further actions might be taken if necessary.

Allegations made against a member of staff policy

It is important that staff avoid putting themselves in situations that may lead to allegations being made against them. However, Step by Step Day Nursery will always consider any allegation made against a member of staff, learner or volunteer for a safeguarding matter in the first instance.

Step by Step Day Nursery

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All allegations of abuse of a child by any category of staff will be taken seriously. The allegation may be made by a child, their parents/carers or other members of staff - both within the setting, or from outside.

An allegation may relate to a recent event or an event that occurred some time ago. The Manager will ensure that whatever the specific nature of the allegation is, it is taken seriously.

Where necessary, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care and Step by Step Day will co-operate fully in the investigation process, following the detailed advice given in the Nursery's procedural document.

In such circumstances, the Nursery's disciplinary procedures will only be initiated in agreement with Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board. OFSTED will be informed of allegations made against a staff member by the Safeguarding Officer or in their absence by their Deputy.

Under no circumstances should allegations be minimised or ignored. The local authority, Safeguarding Children, Ofsted and parent will be informed of the allegation and the progress and outcomes of the investigation.

Allegations made against a practitioner would not be made public knowledge within the setting (either amongst staff or parents/ carers). It is also recognised that some who need to know that a suspension has been made will not need to know the nature of the suspension; This should be kept confidential.

The appropriate professional body and/or vetting and barring board would be informed should any member of staff, learner or volunteer be dismissed on the grounds of any misconduct directly related to any safeguarding issue.

Implementation and monitoring

If the Step by Step Day Nursery child protection policy and procedures are to be effective, they need to be integrated into current practice and implemented in a planned and staged way.

This will involve the following:

- Design and dissemination of information
- Piloting of procedures
- Execution of recruitment strategies for volunteers as well as employees
- Identification of Child Protection Officers
- Provision of training and review of existing training

Monitoring strategy

Step by Step Day Nursery

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It will be the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer to establish and implement the strategy. This might include monitoring:

- The number of allegations made and breakdown of ‘no case’, ‘poor practice’ and ‘abuse’ incidence.
- Feedback from staff, volunteers, learners on the implementation of the policy
- the number of personnel trained in child protection awareness
- the number of enhanced CRB checks made

Other information

For a safe practice all staff members must take into consideration the following:

- Hold a register of every child including relevant medical details and have an up-to-date contact name and number close to hand in case of emergencies.
- Have an accident book detailing any accidents or injuries a child may sustain while at the Nursery, including any action taken. Each entry is to be signed by both a staff member and the parent/carer
- Treat everyone with respect
- Remember that some issues are confidential, only share concerns and seek support from appropriate sources regarding safeguarding children issues
- Provide time for children to talk to you if they wish
- Respect a child’s right to privacy
- Take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- Remember to refer, not investigate any suspicions or allegations of abuse
- Ensure you are aware of current practices in safeguarding children and receive appropriate training
- If you have any concerns or worries, please feel free to discuss it with a member of staff who will do their best to clarify matters for you.

We are not here to pass judgement on parenting styles and recognise that children can, and often do have accidents in non-abusive situations; however we do have a legal and moral obligation to protect the children in our care.

Should any member of staff have concerns for the welfare of any child, they will immediately inform the Nursery’s Safeguarding Children Officer. They will keep accurate records about the information that has been shared. Staff will continue to

keep accurate records of their observations and of anything said to them by the child or others in connection with the suspected abuse.

Allegations against staff procedures

When An Allegation Against A Member Of Staff Arises The Following Procedures Should Be Followed:

Step by Step Day Nursery

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- The Manager must inform the local authority designated officer (LADO) immediately an allegation is made.
- The LADO will advise the Manager whether or not informing the parents of the child/ren involved will impede the disciplinary or investigative processes. Acting on this advice, if it is agreed that the information can be fully or partially shared, the Manager should inform the parent/s. In some circumstances, however, the parent/s may need to be told straight away (e.g. if a child is injured and requires medical treatment).
- The parent/s should be helped to understand the processes involved and be kept informed about the progress of the case and of the outcome where there is no criminal prosecution. This will include the outcome of any disciplinary process, but not the deliberations of, or the information used in, a hearing.
- The Manager should seek advice from the LADO, the police and / or LA children's social care about how much information should be disclosed to the accused person.
- Subject to restrictions on the information that can be shared, the Manager should, as soon as possible, inform the accused person about the nature of the allegation, how enquiries will be conducted and the possible outcome (e.g. disciplinary action, and dismissal or referral to the barring lists or regulatory body).

The accused member of staff will:

- Be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved;
- Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process;
- If suspended, be kept up to date about events in the workplace.

Ofsted will be informed of any allegation or concern made against a member of staff.

Step by Step Day Nursery

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Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the child, parents and accused person (where this would not place the child at further risk) up to date with progress of the case, information will be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children, facilitate enquiries, manage related disciplinary or suitability processes.

Support

Step by Step Day Nursery together with LA children's social care and / or police, where they are involved, will consider the impact on the child concerned and provide support as appropriate. Liaison between the agencies will take place in order to ensure that the child's needs are addressed.

As soon as possible after an allegation has been received, the accused member of staff will be advised to contact their union or professional association

SUSPENSION

Suspension is a neutral act and it will not be automatic. It will be considered in any case where:

- There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm; or
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police; or
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.
- The possible risk of harm to children will be evaluated and managed in respect of the child/ren involved and any other children in the accused member of staff's home, work or community life.
- If a strategy meeting / discussion is to be held or if LA children's social care or the police are to make enquiries, the LADO should canvass their views on suspension and inform the employer.
- Only the Manager, however, has the power to suspend an accused employee and they cannot be required to do so by a local authority or police.
- If a suspended person is to return to work, the Manager will consider what help and support might be appropriate (e.g. a phased return to work and/or provision of a mentor), and also how best to manage the member of staff's contact with the child concerned, if still in the workplace.

Step by Step Day Nursery

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Initial response to an allegation or concern

An allegation against a member of staff may arise from a number of sources (e.g. a report from a child, a concern raised by another adult in the organisation, or a complaint by a parent).

Initial Action by Person Receiving or Identifying an Allegation or Concern

Immediately report the matter to the designated senior manager, or deputy in their absence or where the senior manager is the subject of the allegation.

The manager will not:

- Investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification;
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations;
- Promise confidentiality, but give assurance that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

Initial action by the designated senior manager

When informed of a concern or allegation, the designated senior manager will not investigate the matter or interview the member of staff, child concerned or potential witnesses.

They will:

- Obtain written details of the concern / allegation, signed and dated by the person receiving making the allegation
- Approve and date the written details;
- Record any information about times, dates and location of incident/s and names of any potential witnesses;
- Record discussions about the child and/or member of staff, any decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions.
- The designated senior manager will report the allegation/s to the LADO within one working day. Referral should not be delayed in order to gather information and a failure to report an allegation or concern in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.
- If an allegation requires immediate attention, but is received outside normal office hours, the designated senior manager should consult the LA children's social care emergency duty team or local police and inform the LADO as soon as possible.

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Allegations Against Staff In Their Personal Lives

If an allegation or concern arises about a member of staff, outside of their work with children, and this may present a risk of harm to child/ren for whom the member of staff is responsible, the general principles outlined in these procedures will still apply.

The strategy meeting / discussion should decide whether the concern justifies:

- Approaching the member of staff's employer for further information, in order to assess the level of risk of harm; and / or
- Inviting the employer to a further strategy meeting / discussion about dealing with the possible risk of harm.
- If the member of staff lives in a different authority area to that which covers their workplace, liaison will take place between the relevant agencies in both areas and a joint strategy meeting / discussion convened.

Record keeping and monitoring progress

Record keeping

Records should include details of how any allegation was followed up and resolved, the decisions reached and the action taken. It will be kept at least until the person reaches normal retirement age or for ten years if longer.

Referring to ISA

Step by Step Day Nursery must make a referral to the ISA when both the following conditions have been met. The body:

- Withdraws permission for an individual to engage in regulated or controlled activity, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not regulated or controlled activity; because

Thinks That The Individual Has:

- Engaged in relevant conduct;
- Satisfied the Harm Test; (The harm test is satisfied if the relevant person believes that an individual may:
 - Harm a child or vulnerable adult;
 - Cause a child or vulnerable adult to be harmed;
 - Put a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm;
 - Attempt to harm a child or vulnerable adult; or
 - Incite another to harm a child or vulnerable adult.
- Received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

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| This policy was adopted by | Step by Step Day Nursery | <i>(name of provider)</i> |
| On | June 8 th 2020 | <i>(date)</i> |
| Date to be reviewed | June 2021 | <i>(date)</i> |
| Signed on behalf of the provider | | |
| Name of signatory | Nicola Richardson | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) | Director | |