



Complaints Procedures

Policy no	Version	Date	Review frequency	Next review date	Policy owner
L&M(OP1)	2	October 2017	Quarterly	January 2018	L.Graham/ S.Davies

Table of Contents

Section		Page
1	Index	1
2	Policy Statement	2
3	Definitions	4
4	The Complaints Process	4
5	Independent Disputes Advisor Process	5
6	Monitoring and Review	6
7	Complaints Procedure- Operational	7
8	Complaints Procedure- Children	8
Appendix 1	Ofsted contact details	10

Name	L. Graham/S.Davies	Signature	
Designation	Registered Person/ Head of Care	Date	July 2016

2. Policy Statement

We believe that Our Place Schools provide a good education and care for all of our children and young people. The staff work very hard to build positive relationships with children, their parents, carers, key others and placing authorities.

We aim to ensure that vulnerable children, their parents, carers, key others and placing authorities get the help they need, when they need it however large or small their complaint; and that people who use our service are treated with dignity and respect, are not afraid to make a complaint and have their concerns about the service taken seriously.

Our Place Schools expressly forbids any reprisals against children or others making a complaint.

A full Complaints Procedures Policy will be given to parents on their child's admission to the school and a child accessible format is included in 'The Children's Guide' provided to young people.

Our Place is committed to providing the best care and education for each individual child but should any parent, child, family, member of staff or support service be concerned they will be actively encouraged to share their concern with the appropriate person. Any worries will be promptly addressed.

Children have allocated Key Worker time each week and it is part of this time that is used to help children make complaints using a detailed complaints package created by the speech and language therapy assistant should they wish to do so.

The home have procedures in place, in line with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 in the event that there are complaints regarding the service we provide. The following policy sets out the procedure to be followed in such cases.

Any external complaints from the local community will be handled following the same process by the Registered Manager or Responsible Person.

We believe that a good complaints procedure should ensure that children, their parents and carers who make complaints should have their concern resolved swiftly and within the National Minimum Standard requirement of 28 days, and wherever possible by Our Place Schools, if not by the Independent Disputes Advisor.

The National Minimum Standard makes the following statement: Children and where appropriate their families, significant others and independent visitors are provided with information on how to complain, including how they can secure access to an advocate.

All persons involved with Our Place Schools will be given information on how they can complain. A separate policy has been written to outline to staff and keyworkers how they can support children and young people to make a complaint should they wish to do so. The Speech and Language Assistant will create communications packs individual to each child's communication needs to assist them to complain, the packs would be available to use by whoever the child makes their complaint to.

Support will be given to anyone who wishes to make a complaint and needs assistance to do so. The level of support will include the provision of an interpreter if a person who does not have English as a first language wishes to make a complaint or if a child needs an appropriate advocate to voice their concern or complaint for them.

Our Place aims to be fair, open and honest when handling any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We hope to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and in all cases, we put the interest of the child above all other issues. Through this policy we provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and then resolved.

3. Definitions

A complaint is defined as *"an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or child, which requires a response"*.

Complaints may arise as a result of many things including:

- An unwelcome or disputed decision
- Concern about the quality or appropriateness of a service
- Delay in decision making or the provision of a service
- Delivery or non-delivery of services
- Quantity, frequency, change or cost of a service
- Attitude or behaviour of staff
- Assessment, care management and review

If any person responsible for a child living at the home is unhappy with the education or care that a child is receiving or has any concerns relating to the school or residential provision we encourage that person to talk with either the child's Key Worker or Teacher immediately. If they are not satisfied with the response following the initial contact with the relevant member of staff they should contact the Responsible Person, Registered Person, Heads of Department or Deputy.

Many concerns can be dealt with appropriately by informal discussion and resolution. However, if this has not been possible parents and carers should put their concern or complaint in writing to the Senior Management Team; any complaints will be dealt with through the Complaints Process. All complaints received within the school will be fully responded to within a maximum of 28 days. Children, their families, carers and placing authorities will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint; and the resolution in any format that is acceptable to them. Should the internal Complaints Process still leave the complainant unsatisfied they will be advised to write to the Independent Disputes Advisor and or regulatory bodies.

4. The Complaints Process

- All correspondence, statements and records of complaints made will be regarded as confidential.
- An advocate or interpreter will be made available if necessary to assist with the process.
- Where a parent or responsible person feels that a situation has not been resolved through informal contact and discussion, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should discuss it with the Responsible Person, Registered Person, Heads of Department. We consider any such complaints as being of a very serious nature and will investigate each case thoroughly. Complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

- Any concerns about the safeguarding of children will be referred immediately through the Safeguarding Children Procedure to the relevant social service team or the police.
- Should you feel that a situation has not been resolved through your dialogue with the Responsible Person or Registered Manager or you have a complaint about the Responsible Person/Registered Manager you should first make an informal approach to the Independent Disputes Advisor who has a duty to investigate your complaint. The Independent Disputes Advisor will do all he/she can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school.

5. Independent Disputes Advisor Process

- On receipt of such a complaint, identifying dissatisfaction with the school's response, the Independent Disputes Advisor will investigate the complaint. He/she may engage the services of an independent person to conduct the investigation and to report their findings. All findings will remain confidential.
- Once the complaint has been received and investigated the Independent Disputes Advisor will invite you to a hearing at which you may be joined by a friend or associate. The hearing will take place within ten working days of a receipt of the written complaint. The panel will hear the information relating to the complaint and where appropriate will make findings and recommendations. All parties relevant to the complaint will receive a copy of the findings and recommendations within seven working days of the hearing.
- If the matter cannot be resolved through this process then you have the right to take your complaint to the registered bodies (contact details- Appendix 1). You may lodge your complaint directly with them, though you are encouraged, whenever possible, to first attempt to resolve it with the school using the process identified in this policy.
- Our Place Schools hold the complaints procedures for all Placing Authorities who work with us in order for children, parents, carers or the school to lodge complaints regarding the service provided for children by their Local Authority. Placing Authorities will be informed of all and any complaints that are made.

6. Monitoring and Review

The Responsible Person and Registered Manager monitor the complaints procedure and complaints received in order to ensure that all concerns are handled sensitively and appropriately in line with the School's Quality Auditing system. All complaints received are recorded in a complaints log with information as to how they were resolved. A written record will be made and kept of the person making the complaint, the date and nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint.

Both the Independent Disputes Advisor and OFSTED regularly inspect these records.

This policy is contained in Our Place's Statement of Purpose and is reviewed annually.

7. Complaints Procedure- Operational

All complaints must be dealt with within 28 days of the complaint being received. All complaints must be recorded on the Complaints Sheets in the Team Office then placed into an envelope which must be sealed and passed to the Registered Manager. These are then stored in the Complaints Log which is kept in the Main Office, even if dealt with informally and must be treated confidentially.

Parents, Carers and External Professionals

A parent, carer or External professional are encouraged to discuss the nature of their complaint informally at first with the child's Key Worker or Teacher. This complaint must be recorded on the Complaints Sheets, passed to the Registered Manager in a sealed envelope or the Independent Disputes Advisor if the complaint is about the SMT.

Should the informal process not have resolved the Parent, Carer or External Professional's complaint then the SMT should be notified by the member of staff receiving the complaint to see if it can be resolved by them informally. Again records of this must be kept in the Complaints Log.

Should the concern still not be resolved then the complainant should write a formal letter of complaint to the Registered Person, who will take the matter through the formal complaints process.

Children

A careful record must be made by the staff member or parent, social worker or advocate on the Children's Complaints Sheets, once the issue has been dealt with this must be stored in the child's Permanent File. The member of staff, parent, social worker or advocate are allowed to express their understanding of what the child communicated but this must be kept as a distinct record. The complaint should then be passed to the Key Worker who will address the complaint or pass onto a member of the SMT. If the complaint is about the Key Worker then the complaint should be passed straight to SMT or the Independent Disputes Advisor if the problem is about a member of SMT.

Use the complaints photo pack - Team Office so that the child can identify accurately who they would like to communicate their problem to - staff, parents, Social worker or External Advocate if they have one. If the child chooses parent, Social Worker or Advocate the staff member receiving the complaint should notify SMT so that an appointment can be made for them to visit.

The chosen person and the child should have a quiet room in which to communicate the complaint. Staff must make sure not to lead the child but to allow the child to give their communication in their own time and way - social stories, photos, symbols and so on.

Members of the Community

Complaints from members of the community should be passed straight to the SMT or the most senior staff member on site to address immediately. The senior person on site should inform the SMT immediately on their return to work or sooner depending on the severity of the complaint.

8. Complaints Procedures – Children

Our Place Schools recognise that the children who live in the home may from time to time have legitimate complaints to make. Due to the nature of the children's disabilities it may not be easy for them to express that complaint. This policy has been created so that staff know how to assist a child to complain.

The operational procedure is laid out in the Complaints Procedures policy but the assistance of our children is a specialist field.

Children will have been taught simple communication skills on arrival, if they don't already have these, such as like/don't like and yes/no.

Ensuring Choice

Staff working with a child should always ask prior to giving a child a drink or snack whether the child wants it so the child has a choice. This practice should be extended out to cover all aspects of the child's life such as bathing/showering, the types of toiletries used, clothes worn, hair style etc. The regular practice of giving the children choice and the content of PHSE lessons means that they will be able to decide what is acceptable and what is not.

Complaining

Once a child is able to express that they are unhappy with something staff should enable the child to give more details about their concerns. It may be that the child would rather give more detail to the staff member they have first communicated too, they may prefer to communicate it to someone else their Key Worker or teacher for instance.

1. use photos of staff so that the child can identify who they want to communicate with,

the child may prefer to communicate with their parents/carers, Social Worker or External Advocate. If the child does not choose a staff member from the photos the staff member should show the child photos of these people and then the staff member should let the Senior Managers know so that they can contact the parents/carers, Social Worker or Advocate

2. if another staff member is chosen by the child the Support Worker working with the child should tell the member of staff what has happened previously so as to help the chosen staff member understand

3. the chosen staff member and the child should communicate somewhere in private – quiet sitting room for instance

4. staff should be very careful to not lead the child

5. staff should use the Complaints Pack photos, symbols and social story books to help the child express their problems

6. staff should make a careful record of what the child was telling them – making sure that they do not indicate their own opinion in the text about the child's communication. It is valid for the member of staff to write down their understanding of what the child was communicating but this should be done at the end of the child's communication and made explicit that this is the staff member's opinion

7. the staff member should then pass this information to a member of the Senior Management Team or if it concerns the SMT to the Independent Care and Complaints Advisor. If it is a minor problem that can be dealt with straight away then the staff member who the child disclosed to should deal with it and make sure that the child is told/knows/understands that someone else has been told and the problem will be sorted.

Children should also be informed that they can speak to the Independent Disputes Advisor or the Children's Rights Director. Both of these contacts and the phone numbers for Childline are on the display poster under the 'Who is Here' board in the bedroom corridor. Staff should support children to speak openly and honestly with their Social worker during statutory visits.

Appendix 1.

Independent Disputes Advisor contact details:

Ofsted contact details: Ofsted

PiccadillyGate

StoreStreet

Manchester

M1 2WD

Tel: **0300 123 1231**

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk