Parent and Carer Complaints Policy

Pippa Pop-ins Nursery Schools

Pippa Pop-ins 165 New King's Road (Ofsted ID: EY449873)

Pippa Pop-ins 233 New King's Road (Ofsted ID: EY449869)

Pippa Pop-ins 430 Fulham Road (Ofsted ID: EY449872)

Pippa Pop-ins 5 Kensington Place (Ofsted ID: EY489562)

Pippa Pop-ins 91-93 Princedale Road (Ofsted ID: 2857426)

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Pippa Pop-ins®
Nursery Schools

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1. Scope and Application

1.1 This policy applies to:
Pippa Pop-ins 165 New King's Road (Ofsted ID: EY449873) ("**Pippa Pop-ins**")
Pippa Pop-ins 233 New King's Road (Ofsted ID: EY449869) ("**Pippa Pop-ins**")
Pippa Pop-ins 430 Fulham Road (Ofsted ID: EY449872) ("**Pippa Pop-ins**")
Pippa Pop-ins 5 Kensington Place (Ofsted ID: EY489562) ("**Pippa Pop-ins**")
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1.2 Under this policy all employees, including directors, apprentices, casual workers, whether on permanent or temporary contracts are collectively referred to as '**staff**'.

1.3 This policy does not form part of any contract and Pippa Pop-ins may amend it at any time.

2. Policy Aims

2.1 This policy applies to complaints raised by current parents/carers (together '**parents**'). While Pippa Pop-ins will respond to complaints raised by former parents, there is no obligation to address these under the complaints policy.

2.2 The aim of this policy is to ensure that staff:

2.2.1 deal with complaints promptly and with sensitivity;

2.2.2 resolve a complaint by informal means if at all possible;

2.2.3 maintain confidentiality at all times;

2.2.4 are impartial at all times; and

2.2.5 ensure that a thorough investigation is carried out of matters giving rise to the complaint and to provide appropriate redress where necessary.

2.3 Pippa Pop-ins prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to children in its settings. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by Pippa Pop-ins with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. Pippa Pop-ins makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents on its websites.

2.4 The majority of concerns from parents are handled under the following general procedures. The procedure is divided into four stages. The informal stage aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in the nursery. Stage two is the first formal stage at which written complaints are considered by the Head of Nursery or Principal. Stage three involves an appeal of the complaint to the Dukes Education panel. The final stage involves making a complaint to Ofsted.

2.5 Pippa Pop-ins will be mindful of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in the application of this policy.

2.6 Please note that for the purposes of this policy "working days" refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time.

3. What is a Complaint?

3.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about Pippa Pop-ins as a whole, about a specific nursery or about an individual member of staff. Any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by Pippa Pop-ins is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the Pippa Pop-ins has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly towards their child.

3.2 Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Pippa Pop-ins is here for your child, and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.

3.3 The following are exempt from this complaints policy because they are covered by separate procedures:

3.3.1 matters likely to require a child protection investigation;

3.3.2 whistleblowing;

3.3.3 staff grievances and disciplinary procedures; and

3.3.4 complaints about services provided by other providers who may use nursery premises or facilities.

4. Complaints Procedure

4.1 A formal written record of all complaints will be kept by Pippa Pop-ins, whether they are resolved at the informal stage, the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

4.2 The record must include:

4.2.1 the name of the complainant;

4.2.2 the nature of the complaint;

4.2.3 the date and time the complaint was received;

4.2.4 the action(s) taken;

4.2.5 the result of any investigations; and

4.2.6 any information given to the complainant including a dated response.

4.3 Ofsted inspectors will have access to this record at any time during visits to ensure complaints have been actioned appropriately.

4.4 Stage One: Informal Resolution

4.4.1 It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

4.4.2 If parents have a concern or complaint they should normally contact their child's Key Teacher or Room Leader. They may do so in person, by telephone or in writing. In many cases, the matter will be resolved swiftly, by these means, to the parents' satisfaction. If the Key Teacher or Room Leader cannot resolve the matter alone or if the complaint relates to the Key Teacher/Room Leader, then the Head of Nursery should be informed about the complaint.

4.4.3 If the concern or complaint is made in writing, it will be acknowledged by telephone or in writing (such as email) within two working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable outside of term time.

4.4.4 A written record of informal complaints will be made. If after 10 working days parents are not satisfied that the matter is working towards a resolution, or in the event that the parents and the member of staff dealing with the complaint fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the parents may proceed to Stage 2 of this policy.

4.5 Stage Two: Formal Resolution

4.5.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head of Nursery formally, or to the Principal if the complaint involves the Head of Nursery.

4.5.2 The nature of the complaint must be stated as clearly and precisely as possible, with supporting evidence—it must contain a statement of what actions parents have already taken to resolve the matter and a statement of what actions the parents feel might resolve their complaint.

4.5.3 The Head of Nursery/Principal, or someone on their behalf, will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days of receipt, or as soon as practicable outside of term time. The Head of Nursery/Principal will either investigate the issues that have been raised or will delegate the investigation to another senior member of staff not so far involved with the complaint ("the Delegated Person").

4.5.4 In most cases, the Head of Nursery/Principal or the Delegated Person will speak to or meet the parents concerned to discuss the matter within 10 working days of receiving the complaint in writing. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

4.5.5 It may be necessary for the Head of Nursery/Principal or the Delegated Person to carry out further investigations and these will begin as soon as possible. This can include interviews with staff, children and other relevant people. If the investigation uncovers any concerns relating to safeguarding, then these will be investigated in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

4.5.6 The Head of Nursery/Principal or the Delegated Person will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

4.5.7 Once the Head of Nursery/Principal or the Delegated Person is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing within 28 working days of

receipt of the complaint by the Head of Nursery/Principal as required by the EYFS statutory framework. The Head of Nursery/Principal or the Delegated Person will give reasons for their decision.

4.5.8 If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should request a panel hearing under Stage 3 of this policy.

4.6 Stage Three: Panel Hearing

4.6.1 If (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution under Stage 2) the parents wish to request a panel hearing, the request must be made in writing to the Head of Nursery within 10 working days from the date of the Stage 2 decision letter, stating the outcome they desire and all the grounds of the complaint. The request will only be considered if the procedures at Stages 1 and 2 have been completed.

4.6.2 The Panel will consist of the Principal (if not previously involved), the Head of Safeguarding and Compliance and an independent panel member not involved with the initial complaint or the leadership or daily management of the nursery. The purpose of this arrangement is to provide parents with the opportunity to present their arguments in front of a panel of senior staff members who have no prior knowledge of the details of the case and who can, therefore, consider it without prejudice.

4.6.3 The Stage 3 Panel Hearing will be conducted by way of a review of the decision at Stage 2, unless in specific circumstances the panel believes that a full rehearing of the case is necessary. Recommendations can be made at the discretion of the Panel.

4.6.4 If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than three working days prior to the hearing.

4.6.5 Parents will be invited to attend the Stage 3 Panel hearing in writing. Pippa Pop-ins will make every effort to ensure that the arrangements for the panel hearing are reasonable in order to facilitate parents' attendance. The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person, at the discretion of the Panel. This may be a relative, staff member or friend. Parents must inform the Head of Nursery if they will be accompanied, and by whom, not later than five working days before the date of the hearing. In the event of a parent not exercising the right to attend a Stage 3 Panel Hearing, the Pippa Pop-ins will proceed with the hearing in accordance with the terms of this Complaints Policy.

4.6.6 After establishing the facts, the Panel may:

- dismiss the complaint if the Panel considers the complaint is not made out; or
- uphold the complaint if the Panel considers that the complaint is made out.

4.6.7 A note-taker will attend the hearing to take a note. This will not be a verbatim note but an accurate reflection of what was discussed. Notes of the hearing will be shared

with attendees as soon as practicable after the hearing. To the extent there is any disagreement about the content of those notes or further comments from the parties, these will be considered by and, where possible, resolved by the Chair of the Panel. A copy of any comments on the notes will be appended to the notes.

4.6.8 It is not within the powers of the Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, children or parents. The Panel may make recommendations on these or any other issues to the Head of Nursery or Principal as appropriate.

4.6.9 If possible, the Complaints Panel will reach a decision without the need for further investigation and will write to parents with its decision within 5 working days of the hearing.

4.6.10 Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out and the hearing will be adjourned.

4.6.11 The Panel's decision and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head of Nursery and, where relevant and appropriate, to the staff involved and the person complained about, and shall be made available for inspection at the Pippa Pop-ins by the Principal and by the Head of Nursery. The decision of the Panel will be final.

4.7 Stage Four: External Complaint

4.7.1 If a matter cannot be resolved internally to the satisfaction of the parents, then they have the right to raise the matter with Ofsted. Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills for nurseries in England and investigates all complaints that suggest a provider may not be meeting the requirements of its Ofsted registration.

4.7.2 Ofsted can be contacted by calling 0300 123 4666 or writing to:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

4.7.3 For guidance on concerns and complaints, please visit: Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK

5. Unreasonable Complaints

5.1 Pippa Pop-ins is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with Pippa Pop-ins. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

5.2 Pippa Pop-ins defines serial and unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the Pippa Pop-ins, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints.

5.3 A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

5.3.1 refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;

5.3.2 refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;

5.3.3 refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;

5.3.4 insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;

5.3.5 introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;

5.3.6 makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;

5.3.7 changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;

5.3.8 repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);

5.3.9 refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the Pippa Pop-ins' complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to Ofsted;

5.3.10 seeks an unrealistic outcome; or

5.3.11 makes excessive demands on staff time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone, either while the complaint is being dealt with or at other times

5.4 A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so:

5.4.1 maliciously;

5.4.2 aggressively;

5.4.3 using threats, intimidation or violence;

5.4.4 using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;

5.4.5 knowing it to be false;

5.4.6 using falsified information; or

5.4.7 by publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

5.5 Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with Pippa Pop-ins while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, telephone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

5.6 Whenever possible, the Head of Nursery will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' judgement. If the behaviour continues, the Head of Nursery will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Pippa Pop-ins causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

5.7 In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from Pippa Pop-ins nurseries.