57. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Policy statement

At ASK, we believe that children and parents/carers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve ASK and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the way that it is run. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach with the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. The same procedures apply to agencies who may have a grievance or complaint.

Procedures

ASK is required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents/carers, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent/carer who has a concern about an aspect of the provision given by ASK talks over his/her concerns with our manager first.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- We record the issue, and how it was resolved, in the child's file.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent/carer moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing.
- For parents/carers who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints in the Complaint Investigation Record. The form may be completed by our Registered Provider/Owner or our manager and signed by the parent/carer.
- ASK stores all information relating to written complaints from parents/carers in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, our Registered Provider/Owner or our manager may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.

- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, our manager meets with the parent/carer to discuss the outcome.
- We inform parents/carers of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of him/her making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with our manager and the Registered Provider/Owner. The parent/carer may have a friend or partner present if they prefer.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made, as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint Investigation Record.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent/carer cannot reach agreement with us, we invite an external mediator to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides, and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers, but can help us to define the problem, review the action so far, and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential and can hold separate meetings with our members of staff and the parent/carer, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice that he/she gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent/carer and our manager and Registered Provider/Owner is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.
- A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

Ofsted complaints record

- Legislation requires settings to keep a record of complaints and disclose these to Ofsted at inspection, or if requested by Ofsted at any other time.
- The record of complaints is a summative record only.
- In all cases where a complaint is upheld, a review will be undertaken by the Registered Provider/Owner to look for ways to improve practice where it is required.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

- Parents/carers may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this Complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of ASK's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone, in writing or by completing the online form:

  Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

  Tel: 0300 123 4666

  Complaints | Ofsted
- These details are displayed on the ASK noticeboard.
- If a child appears to be at risk, we follow the procedures of the Hounslow Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if you have made a complaint about the way your data is being handled and remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us. For further information about how we handle your data, please refer to the Privacy Notice given to you when you registered your child at ASK. The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or ico.org.uk.

Records

- A record of complaints in relation to ASK, or the children or the adults working at ASK, is kept for at least three years, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint, and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in our Complaint Investigation Record, which is available for parents/carers and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.

Agencies

- If an individual from another agency wishes to make a formal complaint about a member of staff or any practice of ASK, it should be made in writing to the manager.
- The complaint is acknowledged in writing within 10 days of receiving it.
- The manager investigates the matter and meets with the individual to discuss the matter further within 28 days of the complaint being received.
- An agreement needs to be reached to resolve the matter.
- If agreement is not reached, the complainant may write to the Registered Provider/Owner, who acknowledges the complaint within 5 days and reports back within 14 days.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they are entitled to appeal.

This policy was adopted by:	ASK Kindergarten & Clubs
On:	May 18, 2026
Date to be reviewed:	May 18, 2027
Signatory:	Mark Stewart
Role of Signatory:	Owner & Ofsted Registered Provider