

Essex Wildlife Trust

Nature Nursery: Complaints Policy

A policy describes what we do and how we do it as an organisation. It is a set of agreed principles which set out a course of action adopted by our staff and volunteers. It will often include acceptable methods, behaviours, and an approved procedure. It is usually internal, although some organisational policies are expected to be publicly accessible.

Version Control

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When review is completed, please send to: businesssupport@essexwt.org.uk

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| 2 | 09 June 2023 | J Burlingham | Update to new format Clarify stages of complaint process and link to company documentation Clarify management roles and responsibilities |
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Nature Nursery aims to provide exceptional care and education for all our children. All staff work to build positive relationships with all parents and carers and other agencies/service users we may work with.
- 1.2 However, parents or carers have a right to make a formal complaint or concern about their child's care at the Nursery, which will be dealt with via the steps outlined in this policy.
- 1.3 This policy will also outline the steps for complaints from other agencies or service users.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy entitles any individual to make a formal complaint regarding the operation of the Nature Nursery or of a child's care within.
- 2.2 Other complaints regarding any other part of the Essex Wildlife Trust will be dealt with via the specific company wide policy.

3. Purpose of Policy

- 3.1 The Nature Nursery aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any concern or complaint. All matters raised will be considered, whether formal or informal, and dealt with in the shortest time frame possible.
- 3.2 This policy outlines the steps to be followed for making, recording, reporting and dealing with a complaint.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1. The aim is to resolve any matter initially through talking and mutual understanding, and, in all cases, the interests of the children are held above all other issues. All parties are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their concerns.
- 4.2. There will be sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved. If a problem cannot be resolved informally then the formal complaints procedure can be followed.
- 4.3. The Nature Nursery encourages feedback from parents and carers using the Parent Partnership resources, suggestion boxes and discussions. These are reviewed regularly to identify any issues or underlying trends.

5. Procedure

- 5.1. All childcare providers are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above (as detailed below in section 5.2), and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents, as

well as to Ofsted inspectors on request. A full procedure is set out in the Complaint Investigation Record (Early Years Alliance 2015) which acts as the 'summary log' for this purpose.

5.2. Making a complaint

Stage 1

- 5.2.1. Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the provision discusses this with their child's Key person or Buddy, or directly with the Manager or Deputy Manager.
- 5.2.2. Most concerns should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
- 5.2.3. The issue and resolution will be recorded in the child's file.

Stage 2

- 5.2.4. If Stage 1 does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent or carer moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the Nursery Manager.
- 5.2.5. For parents 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 the Manager or Deputy and signed by the parent.
- 5.2.6. The complaint and all related information will be stored in the child's file.
- 5.2.7. The incident will be investigated internally, involving any relevant support from within the Trust and the Nursery Management Team. Once completed, the Nursery Manager will meet with the parents to discuss the outcome, within 28 days of the initial complaint. This response can be in writing if requested.
- 5.2.8. If the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are recorded on the Complaint Investigation Record, which is available to Ofsted on request.

Stage 3

- 5.2.9. If the parent or carer is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 of the investigation, they can request a meeting with another representative of the Nursery Management Team – primarily the Head of Community Engagement. The parent/carer may have a supporter present if they prefer.
- 5.2.10. An agreed written record of the discussion is made, as well as any decision or actions taken as a result. All the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- 5.2.11. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are recorded in our Complaint Investigation Record and all details will be stored in the child's file.

Stage 4

- 5.2.12. If the parent or carer is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 3 of the investigation, an external mediator can be used to assist. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to

both sides and offer advice. They have no legal powers, but may help to define the issue, review actions and suggest alternative options.

- 5.2.13. The mediator keeps all discussions confidential, and they can hold separate meetings with both parties, if considered appropriate. A record is made of all meetings and advice given.
- 5.2.14. When investigations are completed, a meeting between the parent/carer, the Nursery Manager and the Head of Community Engagement and/or the Director of Engagement is held, in order to come to a resolution.
- 5.2.15. A record of this meeting, including all decisions, is made and is signed by all parties. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded, the summative points are recorded in our Complaint Investigation Record, and all details will be stored in the child's file.

If at this stage, the complaint can still not be resolved, it is considered that it would be referred into the main Essex Wildlife Trust Complaint's policy Stage 3 (see Appendix).

5.3. Complaints and Official Bodies

- 5.3.1. Parents may approach Ofsted directly if the complaint rises to Stage 2 or above. **However, the complaint MUST be raised with the Nursery initially.**
- 5.3.2. If it is deemed that there has been a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, the Nursery Manager we will inform Ofsted, to ensure all legislation is adhered to.
- 5.3.3. The Nursery will provide Ofsted with a summary of complaints made during the last 12 months and the actions taken as a result, or list of complaints made during the last 3 years on request.
- 5.3.4. Parents can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at:
 - Regulatory and Contact (ARC) Team**
 - Ofsted Piccadilly Gate**
 - Store Street**
 - Manchester M1 2WD**
 - Tel: 0300 123 1231**
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-to-ofsted-about-schools-guidance-for-parents>
- 5.3.5. These details are displayed on the Parent's notice board.
- 5.3.6. If a complaint or concern raised indicates that a child/ren appears to be at risk of significant harm, or if there is an allegation that a member of staff has behaved in an inappropriate manner, we will follow all Safeguarding procedures as detailed in the relevant policies and procedures, including reporting to the Essex LADO.

5.3.7.If there is a complaint regarding data handling, this can be referred to The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). Full details of how data on each child is handled within the Nursery can be found in the Children’s Records Policy and Procedure.

5.3.8.The ICO can be contacted at www.ico.org.uk

Information Commissioner’s Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

0303 123 1113

5.4. Records of complaints

5.4.1.A record of complaints in relation to the Nursery, or the children or the adults working in the setting, is kept for at least three years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

5.4.2.The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaint Investigation Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors to view on request.

5.4.3.Details and numbers of complaints received will be integrated into company reports to the Strategic Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

5.5. Managing complaints from other agencies/service users

5.5.1.If an individual from another agency wishes to make a formal complaint about a member of staff or any practice of the setting, it should be made in writing to the Nursery manager.

5.5.2.The complaint is acknowledged in writing within 10 days of receiving it.

5.5.3.The manager will investigate the matter and meet with the individual to discuss, within 28 days of the complaint being received, and an agreement reached. If the complaint relates to the Nursery Manager, it will be referred to the Head of Community Engagement.

5.5.4.If agreement is not reached, the complainant may write to the Head of Community Engagement (or their line manager if the complaint refers to the Nursery Manager), who acknowledges the complaint within 5 days and reports back within 14 days.

5.5.5.If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they are entitled to appeal and are referred to the Director of Engagement or an appropriate member of the Strategic Leadership Team.

5.5.6.The complaint from an agency is recorded in a separate complaints file held separately, but the result of the investigation is recorded in the Complaints Summary Record book.

6. Appendices

This policy is to be read in conjunction with wider Essex Wildlife Trust Policies and Procedures

- 6.1 Children's Records Policy and Procedure
- 6.2 Essex Wildlife Trust Complaints Policy
- 6.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- 6.4 EYFS - Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (up to date version available via Government website)
- 6.5 Managing Children's Absence Policy
- 6.6 Safeguarding Children, Young People & Adults at risk policies and procedures Part 1 and 2

Additional documents and links

Early Years Alliance Complaint Investigation Record

[Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61221/complaints-procedure-ofsted-2015.pdf)

www.ico.org.uk