Complaints & Concerns Policy (2025–2026)

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Complaints and Concerns Policy (Updated 2025)

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures for parents, carers, and others to raise concerns or complaints about Little Wonders Nursery's provision or practices.
It ensures that complaints are handled **fairly, promptly, transparently, and in accordance with Ofsted and DfE guidance (2025)**.
Our aim is to foster open communication and continuous improvement through constructive feedback.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- Parents and guardians of children attending the nursery
- Members of the public or professionals with legitimate concerns about the setting's operation
- Staff, volunteers, or partners involved with Little Wonders Nursery

3. Informal Resolution

In most cases, concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.

- Parents or carers should raise their concern directly with the relevant **staff member** at the earliest opportunity (e.g., during drop-off/pick-up or by arranging a short meeting).
- The staff member should **listen carefully**, acknowledge the concern, and seek a prompt and amicable resolution.
- If the concern cannot be immediately resolved, it should be **referred to the Room Leader or Deputy Manager** for further discussion.

A record of informal concerns may be kept to monitor recurring themes and support service improvement.

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4. Formal Complaint Procedure

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, parents or carers may follow the formal process below.

Step 1: Submit the Complaint

- Complaints must be submitted **in writing** (by email, letter, or through the nursery's complaints form) to the **Nursery Manager** or **Designated Complaints Officer**.
- The written complaint should clearly state:
    - The nature of the concern
    - Relevant dates and people involved
    - Any steps already taken to resolve the issue

Step 2: Acknowledgement

- The nursery will **acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days**.
- The complaint will be logged in the **Complaints Record**, as required by Ofsted.

Step 3: Investigation

- The Nursery Manager (or an independent senior staff member if the complaint concerns the manager) will:
    - Investigate the matter fairly and thoroughly
    - Speak with relevant staff and review evidence
    - Offer the complainant an opportunity to meet and discuss the concern further

Step 4: Outcome

- A **written response** outlining the findings, actions taken, and any resolutions will be provided **within 15 working days** of receiving the complaint.
- If additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of the delay and given an expected response date.

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5. Escalation Procedure (2025 Update)

If the complainant is not satisfied with the nursery's response, the following escalation process applies:

Stage 1: Review by the Nursery Owner or Governing Body

- The complaint will be reviewed by the **Nursery Owner/Proprietor** (or governing committee if applicable).
- They will re-examine the findings, ensure the procedure was followed, and may hold a review meeting with the complainant.
- A written outcome will be provided **within 20 working days**.

Stage 2: External Escalation

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the internal review, they may escalate the matter to external authorities:

- **Ofsted** — if the complaint relates to:
  - The nursery not meeting the *Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)* requirements
  - Safeguarding or welfare concerns
  - Failure to comply with statutory regulations

Contact details (as of 2025):

  - Online: https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints
  - Phone: 0300 123 4666
  - Address: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
- **Local Authority Early Years Team** — for support with concerns about funding, inclusion, or local childcare standards.

All escalation records will be logged and retained as part of the Complaints File.

6. Record Keeping and Monitoring

- The nursery will maintain a **Complaints Log** containing:
  - The date and nature of the complaint
  - Actions taken
  - Outcome and resolution

- Any learning or improvements implemented

Records will be kept **for at least three years**, as required by Ofsted.
Trends from complaints will be reviewed regularly to inform quality improvement.

7. Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated with strict confidentiality.
Information will only be shared with individuals directly involved in investigating or resolving the matter.
Records will be stored securely in accordance with the **nursery's Confidentiality and Data Protection (GDPR) Policy**.

8. Accessibility

This policy is available:

- On the nursery's noticeboard and website
- In alternative formats upon request (e.g., large print or translated copies)

Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns early so that issues can be addressed constructively and collaboratively.