

Oyster Bay Nursery

Complaints Policy

Date written: October 2026

Date of last update: October 2026

Date agreed and ratified by October 2026

Date of next full review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any lessons learnt and/or updates to national or local guidance and procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Debra Hines
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Grace Sidders Rachel Finch
Nominated Individual	Debra Hines
Nursery Manager	Grace Sidders

1. Policy Statement

Oyster Bay Nursery is committed to providing high-quality care and education for every child. We value feedback from parents, carers, staff and other people who use or interact with our service.

We recognise that concerns and complaints provide an opportunity to improve our practice. All complaints will be treated seriously, fairly, respectfully and confidentially, and will be investigated promptly and impartially.

Our aims are to:

- Resolve concerns as early as possible.
- Treat everyone involved with courtesy and respect.
- Investigate complaints fairly and thoroughly.
- Keep complainants informed of progress.
- Provide a clear explanation of decisions and outcomes.
- Make reasonable adjustments to help people access the complaints procedure.
- Use feedback to improve the quality and safety of our provision.
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2. Who Can Make a Complaint?

Parents and carers of children attending Oyster Bay Nursery may raise concerns or make a complaint. We will also consider complaints from other individuals about the care, education or services provided by the nursery.

A complaint may be raised verbally, in writing, by email or in person. Where someone needs support to make a complaint, we will consider reasonable adjustments, including assistance with communication or alternative formats.

3. The Difference Between a Concern and a Complaint

A **concern** is an expression of worry or uncertainty about an issue where reassurance or clarification is sought.

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction about an action, decision, service or failure to act.

We encourage parents and carers to raise concerns as soon as possible so that they can be resolved informally wherever appropriate. If a concern cannot be resolved

informally, or the complainant wishes to make a formal complaint, the formal procedure below will be followed.

4. Stage One: Informal Resolution

In the first instance, parents and carers should raise their concern with the child's key person or the relevant member of staff.

The member of staff will listen carefully, clarify the issue and try to resolve it promptly. They may seek advice or support from the Nursery Manager.

Where appropriate, the nursery may:

- Explain a decision or procedure.
- Clarify a misunderstanding.
- Apologise where something has gone wrong.
- Agree practical steps to resolve the concern.
- Identify improvements to prevent a similar issue occurring again.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may proceed to Stage Two.

5. Stage Two: Formal Complaint to the Nursery Manager

A formal complaint should be made to the Nursery Manager or Nominated Individual. It may be submitted in writing, by email or verbally.

Where possible, the complaint should include:

- The nature of the complaint.
- Relevant dates, events and people involved.
- Any steps already taken to resolve the issue.
- The outcome the complainant would like to achieve.

The nursery will acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint within **five working days**, where practicable.

The Nursery Manager or an appropriate person who has not been directly involved in the matter will investigate. The investigation may include reviewing records, speaking to relevant people and arranging a meeting with the complainant.

A written response will normally be provided within **20 working days** of receipt. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and given an expected response date.

The response will explain the findings, any conclusions reached and any appropriate action to be taken.

6. Stage Three: Review by the Nominated Individual

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage Two, they may request a review by the Nominated Individual or another suitably independent person who has not previously been involved.

The request should explain why the complainant remains dissatisfied and what aspects of the original decision they would like reviewed.

The review will consider whether the complaint was investigated fairly, whether relevant information was considered and whether the outcome was reasonable.

The nursery will aim to provide a written response within **20 working days** of receiving the review request. If this is not possible, the complainant will be kept informed.

This is the final internal stage of the nursery's complaints procedure. Where the complaint concerns the Nominated Individual, an appropriately independent person should be appointed to consider it.

7. Complaints About Staff

Complaints concerning a member of staff will be handled sensitively and fairly. The Nursery Manager or Nominated Individual will investigate or arrange for an appropriate independent person to do so where necessary.

Information about staff employment or disciplinary action is confidential. The complainant will be informed that the concern has been considered and, where appropriate, that suitable action has been taken, but confidential employment details will not normally be disclosed.

Where a complaint raises a safeguarding concern, the nursery's safeguarding procedures will take priority and the relevant authorities will be contacted where required.

8. Safeguarding Complaints

Any concern that a child may be at risk of harm must be acted on immediately and must not be delayed while the ordinary complaints procedure is followed.

The nursery will follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and refer concerns to the appropriate safeguarding authority, children's social care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or police, as appropriate.

Parents and carers may also contact the relevant local authority safeguarding service or Ofsted where appropriate.

9. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All complaints will be handled sensitively. Information will only be shared with people who need it to investigate, respond to or manage the complaint, subject to safeguarding and legal obligations.

The nursery will keep a written record of:

- The complaint and the date it was received.
- The nature of the concern.
- Any investigation undertaken and evidence considered.
- Meetings and discussions relevant to the complaint.
- The outcome and any action agreed.
- The date the response was provided.

Records will be stored securely in accordance with the nursery's Data Protection and Privacy Policy and applicable data protection requirements.

A record of complaints, their outcomes and any action taken will be maintained and made available to Ofsted or other relevant authorities when required.

10. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be considered where sufficient information is available. The Nursery Manager or Nominated Individual will decide whether the nature and seriousness of the information warrants further investigation, particularly where safeguarding or children's welfare may be involved.

11. Unreasonable or Repeated Complaints

Oyster Bay Nursery is committed to treating all complainants fairly. We will not restrict contact simply because someone raises a complaint or remains dissatisfied.

However, where communication becomes threatening, abusive or persistently unreasonable, the nursery may take proportionate steps to protect staff and ensure the complaint can be managed effectively.

Possible steps include agreeing a single point of contact, arranging meetings with two members of staff present or asking that routine communication takes place in writing. Any restrictions will be proportionate and will not prevent the nursery from considering legitimate new concerns or safeguarding information.

Threats or serious incidents of aggression may be reported to the police where appropriate.

12. Withdrawal of a Complaint

A complainant may withdraw their complaint at any stage. Where appropriate, the nursery may ask for confirmation in writing.

If the complaint raises a safeguarding concern or another matter that the nursery is legally required to address, the nursery may still need to take action even if the complaint is withdrawn.

13. External Advice and Escalation

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after completing the nursery's internal procedure, they may contact **Ofsted** or the relevant local authority, depending on the nature of the concern.

Ofsted regulates early years provision in England and may consider information about whether a setting is meeting the relevant requirements. It does not normally act as an appeal body to reconsider every individual complaint or resolve private disputes between parents and providers.

14. Learning and Improvement

The Nursery Manager will review complaints to identify patterns, risks or opportunities to improve care, education, communication and safeguarding practice.

Where appropriate, changes may be made to staff training, nursery procedures or policies. Any actions arising from a complaint will be monitored to ensure they are completed.

15. Making This Policy Available

This policy will be made available to parents and carers on request and through the nursery's usual communication channels.

Staff will be made aware of the complaints procedure and know who to contact when a complaint is received.