



Complaints Procedure

Applies to: All services registered on the Early Years Register (and, where relevant, the Childcare Register)

Effective date: 18 August 2025

Review by: 31 August 2026 (or sooner if legislation/guidance changes)

1. Purpose and scope

We aim to resolve concerns quickly, fairly and transparently, and to learn from every complaint. This procedure explains how parents/carers and others can raise a concern or complaint about any aspect of our provision, how we will investigate, and the standards and timescales we work to. It covers all parts of Venture Outdoor Kindergarten that are registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register (and, where relevant, on the Childcare Register).

Important: If at any point a concern suggests a child is at risk of harm or an allegation is made about an adult, we follow our Safeguarding and Allegations procedures immediately. Those processes take precedence over the routine complaints steps.

2. Principles

- **Child-centred and safety-first:** safeguarding concerns are acted on without delay.
- **Accessible:** you can raise a concern in person, by phone, or in writing (email or letter). We provide reasonable adjustments (translation/interpretation, alternative formats, an advocate) on request.
- **Timely:** we acknowledge promptly and conclude investigations within required timescales.
- **Fair and impartial:** where appropriate, a manager not previously involved will investigate.

- **Respectful and confidential:** we handle information in line with UK GDPR and share only what is necessary.
 - **Learning culture:** we record, review and use complaints to improve our service.
-

3. Definitions

- **Concern** - an issue raised at the earliest opportunity that can often be resolved informally and quickly.
 - **Complaint** - a concern that remains unresolved or is sufficiently serious to require a formal response.
 - **Working days** - Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.
-

4. Who can raise a complaint?

Any parent/carer of a child who attends our setting, a prospective parent, a member of the public, an external professional or staff member may raise a concern or complaint about our provision, facilities, staff conduct, decision-making, administration or the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements.

5. How to raise a concern (Stage 1 - Informal resolution)

Most issues can be resolved quickly by speaking to your child's **key person** or a **senior member of staff** on site. We will:

1. Listen carefully and clarify the outcome you are seeking.
2. Take practical steps to resolve the matter; minor misunderstandings are usually addressed within **48 hours**.
3. Make a brief note of the concern and the resolution (for service learning).

If you remain dissatisfied, or if the matter is complex/serious, please use the formal process below.

6. Making a formal complaint (Stage 2)

Please put your complaint **in writing** (email or letter) to the **Setting Manager** (or the Proprietor/Director if the complaint is about the Manager). Include relevant dates, people involved, what has already been done, and what outcome you seek.

We will:

- **Acknowledge** receipt within **5 working days**;
- **Investigate** proportionately (this may include interviews, reviewing records, obtaining statements and/or advice from relevant agencies);
- **Conclude and respond in writing within 28 days** of receiving your complaint, setting out findings, decisions, and any actions or improvements. If you request it, we will provide the outcome by email.

Where investigations are unavoidably delayed (for example, because external agencies are involved), we will keep you updated and still meet statutory notification duties.

7. Internal review (Stage 3)

If you are not satisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, you may request an internal review by a **senior manager** not previously involved. We will:

- Invite you to a meeting (you may bring a friend/relative/advocate);
- Review the handling of the complaint and any new information;
- Confirm a **final internal decision in writing** and any further actions.

This does not affect your right to contact Ofsted at any time (see Section 9).

8. During the process

- **Support with communication:** Tell us if you need translation, interpretation or other adjustments.
 - **Anonymous complaints:** We will consider and investigate issues raised anonymously as far as possible.
 - **Unreasonable or persistent behaviour:** We may set communication boundaries (for example, a single point of contact or scheduled updates) while ensuring the substance of the complaint is addressed.
 - **Linked procedures:** Behaviour, Equality/SEND, Data Protection, Whistleblowing, Safeguarding & Child Protection, Allegations Against Adults.
-

9. Contacting Ofsted (external escalation)

You can contact **Ofsted** at any stage, particularly if you believe we are not meeting the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** requirements.

Ofsted - Concerns about childcare

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 4666 (Mon–Fri)

Email: CIE@ofsted.gov.uk

Web: www.gov.uk/ofsted

We will cooperate fully with Ofsted and any other relevant agencies.

10. Safeguarding or allegations about adults

If a complaint indicates that a child may be at risk of harm, we will **immediately** follow our Safeguarding procedures. This may include contacting **Children's Social Care**, the **Police**, and, for any **allegation about a member of staff or volunteer**, consulting the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** within **one working day**. Where required by regulation, we will **notify Ofsted within 14 days** of any serious incident or allegation and confirm the actions taken. We will keep you informed of next steps where appropriate, recognising that some information may be restricted while statutory processes are underway.

11. Records and information

We keep a **written record** of all formal complaints and their outcomes, including:

- nature of complaint;
- date received;
- how it was investigated;
- people/agencies involved;
- outcome and actions;
- how/when the outcome was communicated;
- learning/improvements made.

Retention and availability

- Complaint records are retained for **at least three years**.
- We will **make records of complaints available to Ofsted on request**. If requested by Ofsted, we will provide a **summary of complaints made in the last 12 months**

and actions taken, or a **list of complaints made in the last three years** (where applicable to the Childcare Register).

- We will share the outcome with the complainant and, where appropriate, may share anonymised summaries more widely in line with data protection law.

Confidentiality and data protection

- Information is managed in accordance with UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018.
 - Records are stored securely and access is limited to those with a legitimate need to know.
-

12. Monitoring and learning

Senior leaders review complaints at least **termly** to identify trends, ensure actions are implemented, and feed learning into staff training, risk assessments, and policy updates. Key themes are shared with staff and, where appropriate, with parents/carers.

13. Quick guide for parents/carers

1. **Talk to us** - speak to your child's key person or a senior member of staff.
 2. **Write to the Manager** - if unresolved or serious. We acknowledge within 5 working days and respond within 28 days.
 3. **Ask for a review** - if you're not satisfied, a senior manager/proprietor will review.
 4. **Contact Ofsted** - you can contact Ofsted at any time.
-

14. Document control

- **Linked policies:** Safeguarding & Child Protection; Allegations Against Adults; Whistleblowing; Behaviour; SEND & Inclusion; Equality, Diversity & Anti-discrimination; Data Protection/Privacy; Health & Safety.
 - **Version history:** New comprehensive version aligned to current EYFS and Ofsted guidance (August 2025).
-

Appendix A - Complaints Log Template

Complaints Procedure 4.1

Child/Family name (if applicable):

Date received:

Source: parent in person / parent in writing (incl. email) / phone / staff member / Ofsted / anonymous / other

Nature (tick all that apply): safeguarding & welfare / suitable people / staff training & deployment / key person / ratios / health / behaviour / premises & equipment / equal opportunities / information & records / SEND & inclusion / curriculum & learning / fees & admin / other (specify)

Summary of complaint: (include dates/times, locations, people involved)

Initial risk/safeguarding screening: (DSL decision; actions taken)

Investigation steps: (interviews, records reviewed, external advice)

Outcome & decisions: (upheld / partially upheld / not upheld)

Actions taken & improvements: (practice changes, training, policy updates)

How outcome communicated: (meeting / phone / email / letter)

Date outcome communicated:

Follow-up review date:

Manager name & signature:

Complainant signature (optional):

Notes for Ofsted summary (12-month overview):

This procedure is issued to all staff and made available to parents/carers. A copy is provided on request and is published alongside our policies.

Written 18/08/2025