Belsay Daycare Ltd
Complaints Procedure

Preschool, breakfast club, after school club and holiday clubs

Policy statement

Children, parents and carers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and give prompt and serious attention to any concern about how it is run. We expect most concerns to be resolved quickly by talking to the right member of staff. Where that does not work, this procedure explains what happens next.

Making a complaint will never disadvantage a child or family. Children continue to be welcomed and cared for in the usual way while a complaint is being considered.

Aim

We aim to bring every concern about the running of our setting to a fair and satisfactory conclusion for everyone involved, and to learn from it.

Which route to use

Some concerns have their own procedure, because the law or another policy sets out how they must be handled. Please use the route below that fits your concern. If you are not sure, talk to the manager and we will help.

If your concern is about	What to do
A child's safety or welfare, or the conduct of a member of staff towards a child	Tell the manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead straight away, or the chair if it concerns the manager. You can also contact Northumberland Onecall on 01670 536 400. This is handled under our Safeguarding Policy (8), not as a complaint, and may involve the Local Authority Designated Officer and Ofsted.
A decision to suspend or permanently exclude a child	Write to the chair within 14 days of the written confirmation. A panel of trustees with no previous involvement reviews the decision, as set out in our Behaviour Management and Staff Behaviour Policy (12). Any other concern about how a child's behaviour has been managed comes under this procedure.
An invoice or fees	Speak to the manager or treasurer first. While a disputed amount is looked into, we pause the payment recovery process for that amount, as set out in our Fees Policy (28). If it cannot be resolved, use this procedure from Stage 2.
How we handle your personal data	Use this procedure. If you remain dissatisfied, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office (details below).
Anything else about our provision	Use this procedure.

Staff who have a concern about practice in the setting follow our Whistleblowing Policy (21).

Making a complaint

Stage 1: talk to us

- A parent or carer who has a concern about any aspect of our provision talks it over first with their child's key person or with the manager.
- Most concerns are resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2: put it in writing

- If Stage 1 does not resolve the concern, or the problem happens again, the parent or carer puts the complaint in writing to the manager and the chair of the management committee. If the complaint is about the manager, it goes to the chair only.
- A complaint form is available from the setting and can be completed with a member of staff. Forms can also be left anonymously, although we can only reply to complaints where we know who to contact.
- We acknowledge the complaint as soon as possible, and within three working days.
- The complaint is investigated by someone with no involvement in the matter complained about.
- We tell the parent or carer the outcome of the investigation in writing **within 28 days** of receiving the complaint, and the manager or chair meets them to discuss it.
- Written complaints are kept in the complaints file. Where an investigation is detailed, its papers may be kept in a separate file for that complaint.

Stage 3: meeting with the manager and chair

- If the parent or carer is not satisfied with the outcome, they can ask for a meeting with the manager and the chair. If the complaint concerns the manager, the meeting is with two trustees instead. The parent or carer may bring a friend or partner.
- The meeting normally takes place within 14 days of the request.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made, including any decision or action. Everyone present signs the record and receives a copy. If agreement is reached, this concludes the procedure.

Stage 4: mediation

- If agreement cannot be reached at Stage 3, an external mediator acceptable to both sides may be invited to help. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review what has happened so far and suggest ways forward.
- The mediator keeps all discussion confidential. They may meet the setting (manager and chair) and the parent or carer separately, and keep an agreed written record of any meetings and advice.

Stage 5: final meeting

- When the mediator has finished, a final meeting between the parent or carer, the manager and the chair decides what action to take, using the mediator's advice. The mediator attends if everyone thinks this will help.
- A record of the meeting and the decision is made. Everyone present signs it and receives a copy. This concludes the procedure.

Fairness and conflicts of interest

- Nobody investigates or decides on a complaint about a matter they were involved in.
- A trustee who has a personal connection with the complaint, or has been involved in the events, stands aside and another trustee takes their place.

- We treat everyone involved, including staff, with respect, and we keep complaints confidential to those who need to know.

Ofsted, safeguarding partners and the Information Commissioner

- Parents and carers can contact Ofsted at any time. Ofsted encourages parents to raise concerns with the provider first, unless they have good reason not to. **Ofsted:** 0300 123 1231, enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD. These details are also displayed on our parent notice board.
- If Ofsted refers a complaint to us, we investigate it under this procedure and co-operate fully with any Ofsted investigation.
- If a child appears to be at risk, we follow the procedures of the North and South of Tyne Safeguarding Children Partnership and contact Northumberland Onecall on 01670 536 400.
- If you have complained about how we handle your personal data and remain dissatisfied, you can contact the **Information Commissioner's Office**: ico.org.uk, 0303 123 1113, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. Our Privacy Notice, given to you when you registered your child, explains how we handle your data.

Records and learning

- We keep a Complaints Record of every complaint that reaches Stage 2 or beyond, including the date, the circumstances, how it was handled and the outcome.
- The Complaints Record is available to Ofsted inspectors on request, and a summary without names is available to parents on request.
- Complaint records are kept for at least three years. Where a complaint relates to a child's safety or to an accident, records are kept for longer in line with our Children's Records Policy (29) and Provider Records Policy (34).
- The manager gives the committee an anonymised summary of complaints at each meeting, so that trustees can see patterns and make sure lessons are learned.

Approval and review

Version	2.0, October 2026 (replaces March 2023 version)
Effective from	20 October 2026 (approved by the management committee)
Review date	September 2027
Policy number	14
Signed on behalf of the committee	 **Adam Goldwater**, Chair of Trustees Date: 21 October 2026
Signed on behalf of the staff	 **Lisa Mulholland**, Manager Date: 21 October 2026
Related policies	Safeguarding Policy (8); Behaviour Management and Staff Behaviour Policy (12); Whistleblowing Policy (21); Fees Policy 2026-27 (28); Children's Records Policy (29); Information Sharing Policy (31); Provider Records Policy (34); Out of School Club Policy (42); Shared Field and Open-Access Outdoor Space Procedure (44)
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