



## COMPLAINTS POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Our 'Parents as Partners' policy generally keeps channels of communication open and addresses issues as they arise. If you do have a concern or complaint about the provision at Derby Montessori School we suggest that it is best to try to resolve this informally with your child's key worker or Head of Class. However, should this fail, or should you wish to take the complaint further, this policy aims to inform you of how to make a complaint, and of the action that we will take after we have received the complaint.

We will investigate your complaint fairly. This means that we will discuss the complaint with all relevant people. We will try to gather any information that may be relevant to handling your complaint through the use of interviews, reviewing records and other appropriate methods. Sometimes we will show copies of information from the investigation to other people to allow them to respond. This is done because we believe in fairness and openness. We will not share information if we think this will endanger someone's safety or welfare.

We assure all parents that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where to do so would breach terms conditions and regulations, for instance by request of Ofsted or similar inspecting body. The record of the complaint will give details of the date the complaint was made, who made the complaint, the nature of the complaint, how the complaint was investigated and any actions or outcomes. The record does not name individuals and confidentiality is maintained at all times.

### PROCEDURE OF MAKING A COMPLAINT

#### Stage one – Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

- If you have a complaint it is often best to start by having a conversation with your child's keyworker or Head of Class. They may be able to help resolve your problem informally and will endeavour to do so within 48 hours. For the Toddler Community the Head of Class is Miss Watson, for the Children's House it is Mrs Higgins and for the Cosmic Education it is Miss Newsholme.

- If a complaint is made directly to the Principal it will usually be referred to the relevant Head of Class or keyworker unless the Principal deems it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.
- A written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received will be kept. Records of all complaints are kept for at least three years. Should the matter not be resolved within the above time frame or in the event that parents feel that an informal resolution is not possible, they will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

### Stage two – Formal Resolution

If you are not satisfied by the outcome of the informal resolution process and feel that the complaint cannot be resolved, then parents should put their complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. We accept anonymous complaints, but it is often very difficult to investigate these properly. It is easier for us to handle your complaint if you provide as much detail as possible. Formal complaints can be made by email to [principal@derbymontessori.co.uk](mailto:principal@derbymontessori.co.uk) or in writing to Mrs K Methuen-Jones at the usual school address.

- In most cases the Principal will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations.
- The Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing as soon as possible and in any case within 28 days of having received the complaint. The Principal will also give reasons for her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to stage three of this Procedure

### Stage three – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage three (following failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Company Secretary who has been appointed by the Board of Directors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Company Secretary, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days.

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than two days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all relevant facts, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within five working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The decision will be sent in writing to the parents, the Principal, the Board of Directors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

## **POSSIBLE OUTCOMES**

In many cases, we are able to resolve the problem informally. This might include:

- A change in arrangements
- An explanation
- An apology
- An agreement to communicate or act differently in future

If an informal resolution is not suitable one or more of the following formal actions may be decided upon:

- Formal disciplinary action under the terms, conditions and policies of the school
- Formal disciplinary action against a member of staff
- Changes to formal contracts, procedures or policies
- Changes in arrangements or day to day running of the setting
- A decision to refer the case to another organisation such as the police, Social Services or Ofsted.
- Closure of your complaint without action.

## **OFSTED**

Complaints can also be made directly to OfSTED who will pass on your complaint to Derby Montessori School to be investigated, in the first instance. In the event that OfSTED carries out an investigation into the setting's suitability to provide childcare following a complaint, OfSTED will inform Derby Montessori School of the outcome of their investigation. The Principal will include these details on the Complaints Record. OfSTED Helpline: 0845 6014772.