



DEAN CLOSE
LITTLE TREES
NURSERIES

DEAN CLOSE NURSERIES LIMITED

Independent Day Nursery

**Complaints Policy
(NL029)**

Little Trees, Dean Close Nurseries Ltd is wholly owned by The Dean Close Foundation, registered Charity No: 1086829

LITTLE TREES DAY NURSERY

COMPLAINTS POLICY

- This policy has been authorised by the Trustees of The Dean Close Foundation (the “Charity”) for all of its nurseries, (the “Nursery” or the “Setting”).
- This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Foundation Bursar (or the Finance and General Purpose Committee) on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Introduction

1. Our nursery setting believes that children and parents/ 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 will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the Setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our Setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.
2. All complaints raised by parents/ carers will be treated as expressions of genuine dissatisfaction. Complainants can expect to be treated fairly and in accordance with this policy, which follows the principle that the welfare of the child is safeguarded and promoted, and that account must be taken of the ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child.
3. The Nursery will endeavour to deal with all complaints as quickly as possible, having regard for thorough investigation and appropriate consideration. Every endeavour will be made to ensure that at each stage complaints are resolved within 14 days.
4. These procedures apply equally to all our nurseries in Wales and England, except where specific guidelines apply.
5. This document is available on the website of each Nursery and printed copies will be made available to staff and parents/ carers on request.

Stage 1 – Informal (Local) Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally by face to face communication at the Nursery.
- Any parent/ carer who has a concern about an aspect of the provision can raise this directly with the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager. Every effort should be made to be as clear as possible about the issue.
- In many cases, the matter will be resolved amicably and informally at this stage to the carer’s satisfaction
- The Nursery Manager keeps a record of all informal complaints, which are retained for one year
- Complaints made directly to a Nursery Manager or a Deputy Manager will usually be referred to the relevant Room Leader/ Supervisor as part of the investigation were appropriate.

Date of Issue: March 2022
Review Date: March 2023
Owner: Area Manager

- The Nursery aims to acknowledge a written complaint by telephone, email or letter, within 5 working days of receipt in the event that a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached within a reasonable period (not exceeding 14 days, or a further extension of 14 days with the agreement of the complainant), complainants should proceed in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.
- If the complaint is against the Nursery Manager, parents/ carers should make their complaint directly to the Nursery Area Manager.
- If the complaint is against the Nursery Area Manager, parents/ carers should make their complaint directly to the Foundation Bursar.
- **It is an integral part of this policy that the parent/ carer meets with the relevant member of staff at the nursery to fully discuss the complaint.**
- **The complaint cannot progress to Stage 2 unless this informal meeting has been scheduled, held and minuted.**

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution – Informal meetings exhausted. Complaint in writing.

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, or if the problem recurs, the parent/ carer should put their complaint in writing to the Nursery Manager. After considering the complaint, the Nursery Manager will decide on the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Bursar will be notified of the complaint at this stage for tracking purposes.
- For parents/ carers who are not comfortable with making written complaints, a template form is available from the Manager's office. The form may be completed with the support of the Nursery Manager and signed by the parent/ carer.
- In most cases, the Nursery Manager will meet with the parents/ carers, within 5 working days of receiving the Stage 2 complaint and if possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. Meetings will normally be held on the Nursery premises. Every effort must be made to have face to face meetings. Where circumstances prevent a face to face meeting, discussions will take place by telephone or, if necessary, by e-mail. A written record will be taken.
- The Nursery Manager will produce written records of **all** meetings, discussions and interviews or may arrange for another member of staff to attend to make such records. The Nursery Manager may also arrange for other members of staff to attend the meeting if he/she believes that their presence can assist in the resolution of the complaint; parents/ carers should be informed in advance if others are to attend the meeting.
- It may be necessary for the Nursery Manager to carry out further investigations before arriving at a decision. Once the Nursery Manager is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents/ carers will be informed of the outcome in writing within 10 working days following the meeting. The Nursery Manager will give reasons for their findings and, if appropriate, outline any remedies that are to be put in place. If the parents/ carers are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure within 28 days of receipt of the written outcome.
- When a complaint is resolved at stage 2, the Nursery Manager will ensure that all related records and correspondence (including copies of all e-mails) are retained for three years from the date of the matter being resolved.
- A statement of the decision will be sent to the complainant and an acknowledgement of receipt should be obtained, where possible in order to establish that the complaint has been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

- If the complaint is against the Nursery Manager, the Area Manager will call for a full report from the Nursery Manager, relevant staff and for all the appropriate documents. The Area Manager will talk to the complainants to hear their concerns and discuss the matter further. Once the Area Manager is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents/ carers will be informed of the decision in writing. The Area Manager will give reasons for their decision.
- If the complaint is against the Area Manager, the Bursar will call for a full report from the Area Manager any relevant staff and for all applicable documents. The Bursar will talk to the complainants to hear their concerns and discuss the matter further. Once the Bursar is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Bursar will give reasons for their decision.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents/ carers wish to take their complaint to Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should write to the Bursar or Warden who have been appointed by the Board of Trustees to convene hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- Complainants should explain the grounds for their complaint in writing and what remedy they are seeking.
- This letter needs to be within one month of the date of the letter issued at the end of Stage 2 or the complaint lapses and the procedure ends.
- The Bursar or Warden will then refer the matter to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three individuals who have had no direct involvement in the matters raised in the complaint. These may include Trustees, the Warden, the Area Manager, the Bursar, the Training and Development Manager or a different Nursery Manager.
- The Complaints Panel will include one external panel member who is independent of the governance or management of the Nursery. The Bursar, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing which will normally be within 14 days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, they may require that further information concerning the complaint, or any related matter, be provided copies of such information to all parties no later than five working days prior to the Hearing.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation; however, if further investigation is required, they will decide how it should be carried out.
- The hearing will be held at a Dean Close Foundation property at the discretion of the Chairman of the Panel.
- Recording of the panel hearing will not be allowed or valid unless agreed by the Panel Chairman.
- Parents/ carers may be accompanied to the Hearing by one other person. The Hearing is not a legal proceeding and the Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses. Legal representation at this stage is not normally appropriate.
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant following any further investigation, the Panel will reach a decision; within 14 days, but no more than 28 days of the Hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final.

- The Panel's findings and recommendations will be sent in writing and by email to the parents/ carers with reasons for the decision and, if appropriate, an outline of any remedies that are to be put in place.
- Copies will also be sent to the Nursery Manager, Area Manager, Warden and Bursar. In addition, a copy will be available at the nursery, for inspection by the relevant inspectorate.
- If the complaint was against a member of staff then the Panel's findings and recommendations will be sent in writing to the staff member with reasons for the decision and, if appropriate, an outline of any remedies that are to be put in place.
- When a complaint has been resolved at Stage 3, the Bursary will ensure that all related records and correspondence (including copies of all e-mails) are retained for three years from the date of the matter being resolved. However, it should be noted that the DfE advises, in the case of child protection records or contentious disputes records can be held indefinitely.

Contact Details

At Dean Close House

Nursery Area Manager – Charlene Burgess
cburgess@deanclosenurseries.co.uk, 07884 666191

Nursery Assistant Area Manager – Karen Green
kjgreen@deanclosenurseries.co.uk, 07867 382556

Foundation Bursar/ Responsible Individual – Adrian Bowcher
apbowcher@deanclose.org.uk, 01242 258000

Relevant Inspectorates

The relevant inspectorates are contactable and you may discuss your concerns at any time during the complaint's procedure. The relevant inspectorate will listen to any concerns raised and take appropriate action if it is deemed that we were not meeting the requirements and conditions of our registration.

Concerning Little Trees in England

OFSTED
National Business Centre
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone: **0300 123 1231**

Concerning Little Trees in Wales

CIW
CIW National Office
Welsh Government
Merthyr Tydfil
Rhydycar
CF48 1UZ

Telephone: **0300 7900 126**

Confidentiality, Reporting and Record Keeping

Date of Issue: March 2022
Review Date: March 2023
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Concerns and complaints raised by parents/ carers, including correspondence, statements and records will be treated sensitively and confidentially. However, details may be provided to CIW or Ofsted on their request.

The Summary Complaints Log for each setting, and held by the Nursery Area Manager for any Stage 3 complaints, will contain the following information:

- name of complainant;
- nature of complaint;
- date and time of complaint;
- action taken in response to the complaint;
- result of complaint investigation;
- information given to the complainant, including the date of response.

This procedure will also be followed, by the Area Manager should a complaint be made about the Nursery Manager, and by the Responsible Individual should a complaint arise about the Area Manager, and by the Trustees should a complaint arise about the Responsible Individual.

Complaints subject to concurrent consideration

The consideration of complaints subject to concurrent consideration may be discontinued if at any time it appears to the Nursery that to continue would compromise or prejudice the other consideration. Where a complaint relates to any matter:

- about which the complainant has stated in writing that he or she intends to take proceedings in any court or tribunal, or
- about which the Nursery is taking or is proposing to take disciplinary proceedings, or
- about which the Nursery has been notified that an investigation is being conducted by any person or body in contemplation of criminal proceedings, or
- about which a meeting involving other bodies including the police has been convened to discuss issues relating to the protection of children or vulnerable adults, or
- about which the Nursery has been notified that there are current investigations in contemplation of proceedings
- about which the Nursery has been notified that a local authority has or is instigating child protection enquiries,

The Nursery will consider, in consultation with the complainant and any other person or body which they consider appropriate to consult, how the complaint should be handled. Where the Nursery decides to discontinue the consideration of a complaint, notice of that decision will be made to the complainant. Consideration can be resumed at any time, and will ascertain the progress of the concurrent consideration. The Nursery will resume consideration of any complaint where the concurrent consideration is discontinued or completed and the complainant requests that the complaint be re-considered.