COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS POLICY

Applies to all families, staff, visitors and others using or engagement Dots & Tots Day Nursery.

Policy Statement

Dots & Tots Day Nursery is committed to providing high-quality, safe and inclusive early years care. We welcome open communication with families and recognise that concerns, complaints and compliments provide valuable opportunities to reflect, respond and continually improve our practice.

Families will be treated fairly, respectfully and without disadvantage for raising concern or complaint. A child's care, relationships and access to nursery will never be adversely affected because a parent or carer has raised concern.

Purpose

This policy explains how concerns and complaints will be received, investigated, recorded and responded to, and how compliments and positive feedback will be shared and used. It supports the nursery's responsibilities under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

Our Approach to Concerns

We encourage parents and carers to raise any concerns as early as possible. Many concerns can be resolved quickly through an open conversation with the child's key person, Room Leader, Nursery Manager or another appropriate member of the leadership team.

Where a concern can be resolved informally, the nursery will listen carefully, clarify what has happened, agree any appropriate action and communicate the outcome. A parent or carer may choose to make a formal complaint at any stage.

Making a Formal Complaint

A formal complaint should normally be made in writing or by email to the Nursery Manager or Registered Provider. Where a person requires support to make a complaint, the nursery will make reasonable arrangements to help them communicate their concern.

- The complaint should explain the concern, relevant dates or events, and the outcome the complainant is seeking where known.
- The nursery will acknowledge receipt and identify who will investigate the complaint.
- Where the complaint concerns the Nursery Manager, it will be handled by the Registered Provider
- Where the complaint concerns the Registered Provider, the nursery will ensure the matter is considered objectively and will seek appropriate external advice where necessary.

Investigation and Response

Written complaints will be investigated fairly and without unreasonable delay. The person making the complaint will be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of the nursery receiving the complaint.

The investigation may include speaking with relevant staff, reviewing records, policies, risk assessments, communications, ring doorbell footage or other available information where applicable and lawful, and considering whether practice or procedures need to change.

The written outcome will normally explain the issue considered, the findings that can appropriately be shared, and any action already taken or planned. Information about other children, families or confidential staff matters will not be disclosed.

Safeguarding Concerns

A complaint that raises a safeguarding or child protection concern will not be managed solely as an ordinary complaint. The nursery's Safeguarding Policy will be followed immediately, DSL informed and information will be referred to the appropriate safeguarding agencies where required.

If a child may be at immediate risk of harm, safeguarding action takes priority over the complaints process. The nursery will not delay a necessary safeguarding referral while an internal complaint is being investigated. Should a member of staff be part of the safeguarding complaint then both Ofsted and Lado will be notified immediately.

Complaints About Staff Conduct

Where a complaint relates to the conduct of a member of staff, the Nursery Manager or Registered Provider will consider whether the matter should also be managed under safeguarding, low-level concerns, disciplinary, whistleblowing or other relevant procedures.

Allegations of harm or possible harm involving a person working with children will be managed in accordance with the nursery's safeguarding procedures and current statutory notification/referral requirements. Both Lado and Ofsted will be informed about compliance and advice immediately. Our early years advisor will also be notified for support and advice.

Records of Complaints

Dots & Tots will keep a written record of complaints and their outcomes. Records will be sufficiently clear to demonstrate the concern raised, how it was investigated, the conclusion reached and any action taken.

- Complaint records will be stored securely and treated as confidential.
- Information will be shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know.
- Records of complaints will be made available to Ofsted on request.
- Themes or repeated concerns will be reviewed by management to identify learning, training or changes to practice.

Contacting Ofsted

Parents and carers may contact Ofsted if they believe the nursery is not meeting the EYFS requirements and legal obligations, if they remain dissatisfied after using the nursery's complaints procedure, or where the nature of the concern means it is not appropriate to raise it with the nursery first.

Ofsted childcare concerns and complaints: 0300 123 4666. Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Ofsted's role is to consider whether a registered childcare provider is meeting their registration requirements. Ofsted does not resolve individual contractual disputes between a parent and a provider.

Complaints Involving Other Agencies

Where a concern falls within the responsibility of another organisation, the nursery may signpost or refer the matter appropriately. Concerns that a child is at risk of harm will be referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (children's social services) or police. In an emergency or where a child is in immediate danger, 999 should be called immediately.

Confidentiality and Fairness

Complaints will be handled sensitively, and information will be shared on a need-to-know basis. The nursery cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality where information must be shared to safeguard a child, meet a legal duty, support a fair investigation or respond to a regulator or other authorised body.

No person will be treated unfavourably for raising a genuine concern in good faith. Equally, staff who are the subject of a complaint will be treated fairly and given an appropriate opportunity to provide relevant information.

Unreasonable or Persistent Behaviour

The nursery will remain respectful and accessible even where a complaint is difficult or ongoing. However, abusive, threatening, discriminatory or harassing behaviour towards children, staff or families will not be accepted. Where contact becomes unreasonably repetitive or disruptive, management may agree proportionate arrangements for communication while ensuring that legitimate concerns can still be raised and considered.

Compliments and Positive Feedback

Dots & Tots warmly welcomes compliments and positive feedback from children, parents, carers, professionals and visitors. Compliments may be given verbally, in writing, by email, through feedback forms or through other nursery communication channels.

Where appropriate, positive feedback will be shared with the staff involved and may be used to recognise good practice, inform supervision and appraisal, and identify approaches that should be continued across the nursery. Permission will be obtained before identifiable feedback is used publicly.

Learning and Continuous Improvement

Complaints, concerns and compliments are reviewed as part of the nursery's quality assurance processes. Where learning is identified, this may result in changes to procedures, staff guidance, training, risk assessments, the environment or communication with families.

Where a complaint identifies that something could have been handled better, the nursery will focus on putting matters right where possible and reducing the likelihood of recurrence.

Responsibilities

- Registered Provider/Nominated Individual: overall oversight of the complaints process and regulatory compliance.
- Nursery Manager: day-to-day management of complaints, investigations, records and actions.
- Room Leaders and practitioners: listen to concerns, respond within their role and escalate matters promptly where management input is required.
- All staff: maintain confidentiality, cooperate with investigations and follow safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures where applicable.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, nursery arrangements or learning from a complaint indicates that changes are required.

Policy Created: October 2026

Policy Review: October 2027

Version: 1.0

Signed

Christie Patton

Company Owner