



# Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

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## Compliments/Comments/Complaints Policy

### **Principle**

Ballygawley Early Years aims to provide the highest quality care and education for all children attending the setting. We are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to meet their needs and the needs of their children. We are committed to ensure any concerns are resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of all concerned.

### **Policy**

The management of Ballygawley Early Years endeavours to quickly and informally resolve concerns, through discussion with the appropriate member of the setting staff in the first instance. All comments and complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially. If a parent/carer is not satisfied with any aspect of the provision of care and cannot informally resolve the issue, they may then follow the complaints procedure.

### **Aims**

Ballygawley Early Years has the following aims in dealing with concerns and/or complaints:

- To deal with concerns and complaints efficiently and effectively;
- To conduct all investigations promptly, openly, honestly and objectively;
- To respond to complaints as promptly as possible, ensuring all issues raised are addressed;
- To improve service, procedures and practices where necessary;
- To monitor the effectiveness of complaint handling and responsiveness on a regular basis;
- To respect confidentiality and data in line with legislation.

### **Exemptions**

Anonymous complaints will not usually be investigated but will be recorded. Complaints where another policy or procedure is more applicable will usually be dealt with under different policy procedures, e.g. staff disciplinary procedures.

### **Concerns procedure**

A concern is an informal complaint which can be discussed/raised on an informal basis through questions or expressing opinions, and resolved without moving to formal procedures.



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At Ballygawley Early Years, we will seek the opinions of parents/guardians by:

- Staff making themselves available daily, for formal/informal conversations regarding any concerns.
- Encouraging parents to place comments in the comments box which can be found in the entrance hall.
- Speaking to the Management Committee.
- Having meetings between parents and their child's keyworker, on a more formal basis three times a year.

If a concern cannot be dealt with at this stage, a complaint in writing should be made (see procedure below).

## **Complaints procedure**

A complaint is something that is unsatisfactory, unacceptable or an expression of dissatisfaction.

A complaint can be made by a parent, carer or guardian; a member of the public, or a practitioner working in the setting.

If, for any reason you are not happy with the service Ballygawley Early Years provides, or any aspect of it, this is the procedure for you to make that known and this is how Ballygawley Early Years will listen and respond:

- Speak to the leader in charge or your child's key worker.
- If the issue is not resolved or reoccurs, the parent/carer should put their complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Management Committee (see Appendix 1 - Complaint recording form). If assistance is required with the completion or submission of a complaint, help should be sought from the Playgroup Leader.
- Any verbal complaints should be confirmed in writing within 3-5 working days.
- Complaints should be made in writing no later than 3 weeks from the issue arising.
- The Chairperson of the Management Committee will endeavour to resolve your concerns through discussion with the Leader/ key worker.
- The Chairperson will send a written response to your concern within 10 working days of receiving your letter.
- A meeting may be offered to explain how the investigation was carried out and decisions reached.



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- Both parties may have another person present and a written record of the meeting will be kept.
- Decisions made at this stage will be final. An appeal is only possible if evidence can be provided that a full and fair investigation was not carried out. An appeal should be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Management Committee.
- Most complaints should be resolved at this stage. However, should we be unable to reach an agreement, an external mediator may be invited to help resolve the issue.
- Please note: If your complaint is made directly, e.g. to HighScope Ireland or the Education Authority, it is likely such bodies will follow their own complaints procedures.
- In some circumstances it may be necessary to involve the Health and Social Care Trust if a child appears to be at risk or there is a possible breach of registration requirements. In this case a further investigation of the complaint would be carried out.
- Raising of concerns or complaints provides Ballygawley Early Years with an opportunity to improve our services and quality of provision.

## **Appeals Procedure**

- An appeal is only possible if evidence can be provided that a full and fair investigation was not carried out.
- An appeal should be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Management Committee, within 10 working days of the receipt of the response letter.
- A panel meeting will be convened within 20 days, to include the complainant and 1-3 members of the Management Committee with no previous involvement or knowledge of the investigation.
- The panel will consider how the complaint was investigated and handled, but it will not re-investigate the case.
- The decision will be communicated to the complainant within 3 working days.
- Most complaints should be resolved at this stage. However, should we be unable to reach an agreement, an external mediator may be invited to help resolve the issue.
- If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can contact the Southern Health and Social Care Trust or Education Authority.

Contact details:

Gateway team (child protection issues): 028 37415285

Southern Health & Social Care Trust - Early Years Team: 028 37564020



# Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

This policy was adapted at a meeting of our playgroup held on the 30th May 2023

## Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the management team to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

This policy was reviewed by the Ballygawley Early Years Management Committee on:

Date: 07/05/2024

Signed:

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(on behalf of the Management Committee)

Name and Position: Caroline Buchanan, Chairperson

Reviewed on:

Date: .....

Signed:.....Position:.....

Date: .....

Signed:.....Position:.....

Date: .....

Signed:.....Position:.....

### Links with other policies:

Confidentiality & Clients Access to Records Policy

Data Management Policy

Partnership & Partnership with Parents Policy

Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy

Whistleblowing Policy



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## Appendix 1: Complaint recording form

Name of setting:

Date:

Who is making the complaint:

Who received the complaint:

The context of the complaint:

Signed by the complainant:

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Action taken by the setting (leader dealt with issue, referred matter to Management Committee etc):

Signed:

Date:

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Follow up: (setting informed or asked advice from the Management Committee, Early Years, Social Services etc):

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Findings of the enquiry (e.g. issue solved successfully etc):

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Signed by the complainant:

Date:

I am / am not satisfied with the steps taken to resolve the matter.

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Where the complainant remains dissatisfied, they are advised of other channels available to them to pursue their complaint further:

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Signed by the Chairperson of the Management Committee:

Date: