

# Little Stars on the Lane Complaints Policy – School Aged Childcare

## Policy Statement

**Little Stars on the Lane** is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone that comes in contact with our service and welcome school aged children's and parent's views of the service. We

understand that at times families may have a concern or feedback about the service. We are committed to giving careful attention and a courteous, timely response to your suggestions, comments or complaints so that we can learn from them and continuously improve our service. Complaints will be accepted and investigated irrespective of the nature of the complaint or who the

person making the complaint is.

## Principle:

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Aged Childcare) Regulations 2018.

- If the complaint has been made against a staff member, the staff member involved will be informed that a formal complaint has been made and given full details. The staff member will be given the right to reply. If determined necessary by the registered provider, a staff member whom a complaint has been made about may be placed on paid suspension pending the investigation.
- If necessary, a request may be made in writing to the owner/manager or the management committee to have the complaint heard by a wider group. This group could comprise of the owner/manager plus external mediator, or in the case of committee managed services, two members of the committee plus an external mediator. Membership of this panel should not comprise of any person directly involved in the complaint or related to the complainant or staff member.
- The person making the request should be advised that they are free to bring another person with them to a meeting to hear the complaint and to record minutes.
- If the complaint involves a child protection concern, a separate reporting procedure will be followed in line with the child protection policy.
- An agreed written record of the meeting will be kept by the external mediator and, where appropriate, a formal letter of the outcome will be issued, within a reasonable period following the meeting.
- Records in writing of any complaints, including any outcomes, must be retained for a period of two years from the date the complaint has been dealt with and should be available for inspection.
- The complaints policy and children's complaints policy are accessible and displayed in locations that parents/guardians and children can easily see them.

## Sample Procedure

**Little Stars on the Lane** is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone we deal with. If children/parents/guardians/other individuals have any comments or complaints about our service, we would like to hear from you. We are committed to listening to all

complaints and to treating them seriously so that we can learn from them and continuously improve our school aged childcare service. In the first instance, we hope that complaints would be handled informally. In the event that a complaint cannot be handled informally within the service, we advise individuals to follow the procedure set out in this policy. All complaints made are treated confidentially.

We respect school aged children's voice and their right to raise comments or complaints about our service. We have a child friendly complaints policy available to all children in our service. We accept complaints directly from children and via their parents/guardians. This child friendly policy can be found at the end of this complaints policy.

**Little Stars on the Lane** endeavours to fulfil the following values in all aspects of our work:

- - Respectful partnership
- - Focusing on the needs and well-being of the children attending our service
- - Positive engagement with parents
- - Openness and sharing of information
- - Professional and efficient

### **How to make a complaint**

#### Informal

In the first instance, we invite all parents/guardians to make a complaint informally. This should ideally be done in person and can be a conversation with the room leader, manager or registered provider.

Where possible we endeavour to resolve all complaints informally if possible. We aim to ensure making a complaint is as easy as possible and to deal with it promptly and politely. We endeavour to learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures. We aim to informally resolve a complaint as soon as possible but within a **maximum of 5 working days**.

You can make a formal complaint by:

- - E-mail: [\\_ciara@naionra.org](mailto:_ciara@naionra.org) addressed to [\\_Ciara.Watson](mailto:_Ciara.Watson)

If you have a difficulty with submitting a complaint in writing, please contact us by phone or in person and we can support you with making the complaint.

Please include the following information when making a complaint to the Manager/Registered Provider:

- - Name, address, a daytime telephone number and an email address if applicable
- - Full details of the complaint including relevant dates and times
- - Names of those involved (including staff)
- - Be clear about what you are hoping to achieve (apology, explanation etc.)
- - Copies of any relevant documentation
- - State your preferred method of communication

See form in the appendix of this policy to completed if you wish.

### **Dealing with your formal complaint**

1. We will formally acknowledge your complaint **within 5 working days**.
2. The Manager/Registered Provider will assess the complaint and the level of risk posed.

If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

3. The Manager/Registered Provider will confirm that the issue raised in the complaint is within the control of the service. If there is more than one issue raised in the complaint, the Registered Provider will determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.
4. The Manager/Registered Provider will look at addressing the complaint. We will let you know if this includes an investigation. If the complaint is straightforward, generally someone from the service will investigate. We will let you know who will be investigating your complaint.
5. If necessary, an investigation panel is formed to investigate the complaint. The persons investigating the complaint are in no way involved in the complaint, are not related to the complainant or any staff members involved in the complaint. Following investigating of the complaint, a separate HR procedure may need to be invoked.
6. A full response to the complaint will issue **within 30 working days**.
7. If there is a delay to the timeline of issuing a response we will notify the person making the complaint as soon as possible.
8. The person making the complaint will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint.

<p>If your complaint cannot be dealt with informally, we will direct you to our formal complaints procedure.</p> <p><b>Formal</b></p> <p>There are certain times when a complaint cannot be handled informally. In these circumstances we</p>
<p>direct parents/guardians/other individuals to make a formal complaint in writing. If you wish to make a formal complaint we request that you follow the below steps:</p>

### **Investigation**

Depending on the nature of the complaint received, the manager/registered provider will determine the type of investigation that will take place. All complaints are thoroughly and objectively investigated. The investigation is handled appropriately and sensitively. The person investigating the complaint will aim first to establish the facts related to the case. In complex cases, an investigation plan will be drawn up outlining how the complaint will be investigated. When investigating a complaint, all relevant evidence will be looked at. In the process of the investigation we may need to meet with the complainant to discuss your complaint further. Complainants can bring a person with them to any such meeting.

All staff must participate in the investigation of a complaint, as required. Any staff member involved in the complaint will be supported throughout the process.

### **Outcome and Response**

Following the formal investigation of your complaint, we will let you know what we have found via your preferred form of communication. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions and outline any changes to policies/procedures, practice and risk management arising from the investigation. Where no grounds for the complaint are found, the person making the complaint will be notified and information detailing the next stage will be provided. We will share any recommendations from our investigation with the complainant and also all relevant staff. We will outline the appeals process as part of the complaint response.

### **Appeal**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to the complaint, then there is the opportunity to appeal it. The appeal must be submitted within **5 working days**. The appeal is handled by someone who was not involved in the original complaint process.

### **Record of Complaints and Confidentiality**

An accurate and detailed record of each complaint is kept for a period of 2 years from the date the complaint has been dealt with. Complaint information is stored confidentially in the service and is only accessed by the Registered Provider and Manager. The people who have access to complaint records are named at the bottom of this policy. The record held on file clearly outlines what the complaint was and how it was dealt with by the service. The record of complaints is available for inspection purposes by authorised persons.

### **Complaint not within the scope of the service**

Any complaints not within the scope of the school aged childcare service to investigate, will be referred appropriately. For example:

- If there are child safeguarding concerns relating to a complaint, the designated liaison person is informed, and the child protection policy of the service is followed.
- If a complaint involves a potential criminal offence, An Garda Síochána is notified.

### **What we expect from complainants**

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

**Below is an example of a poster in the afterschool encouraging our afterschoolers to have agency in their own space and to come to speak to us if something is not right:**

### **You are welcome to come and talk to us any time**

As a child/young person attending **Little Stars on the Lane**, is there anything you are unhappy about? If you have a comment or complaint about **Little Stars on the Lane**, please tell us as soon as possible. You can speak to your leader directly or speak to Ciara Watson, the manager. We are always here to listen to you.

If you would prefer to write it down, you can email [ciara@naionra.org](mailto:ciara@naionra.org)

You can also ask your mum or dad, granny or . If you need help with making a complaint

We will acknowledge any complaint you make as soon as possible, no more than **5 days** after you have made the complaint.

When we receive a complaint from you, we will investigate that complaint in the same way that we would investigate a complaint that comes in from an adult. We take all complaints seriously and we will listen to all children that make a complaint about **Little Stars on the Lane**. We will try to make improvements based on complaints and always try to resolve the issue that is causing you concern.

**Little Stars on the Lane** aims to deal with all complaints within **1 month**. You will always be kept informed about your complaint, please let us know how you would like us to update you.

We will talk to you about your complaint if we have questions or need to find out more about what happened.



Signature of Complainant: .....

Date: ..... Signature of manager receiving  
complaint: ..... Date: .....