**Grievance Policy**

**Purpose of Policy**

This policy aims to ensure that all nursery staff have access to a procedure to help deal with any grievance relating to their employment fairly and without unreasonable delay.

It provides details of how complaints can be dealt with informally, where possible, but also sets out the process for making a formal grievance if necessary.

**Why do we need a Grievance Procedure?**

Dissatisfaction amongst employees impacts on the Company providing good customer service and the overall performance of the business. You are therefore encouraged to try to resolve problems informally before pursuing a formal grievance. Where it is not possible to resolve a concern informally, the formal process detailed below is in place to resolve matters.

The policy also ensures that the Company deals with grievances in accordance with its legal requirements.

**What is a Grievance and When Does the Procedure Apply?**

A grievance is a concern you may raise, either verbally or in writing, about any aspect of your employment. In order to be considered, you must put your name to a grievance. Anonymous complaints will not be dealt with via the formal grievance procedure. The grievance procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service.

Generally, it will be up to you to decide whether you wish to progress a grievance. However, as an employer, the nursery has a duty of care to protect all of its employees and we may occasionally decide to pursue a complaint independently if we consider it is appropriate to do so.

If you make a written complaint you should expect it to be dealt with via the formal grievance procedure described below. A verbal complaint will not automatically be dealt with in this way - see details below regarding raising an informal grievance.

This procedure should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. In these cases an appeal should be submitted under the company’s Disciplinary Procedure.

**Raising Grievances Informally**

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally by talking through your concern with your manager. If you feel unable to speak to your manager, for example, because the complaint concerns them, then you should raise your concerns with the Board of Directors.

The steps taken at the informal stage to deal with your grievance will vary depending on the nature of the complaint and the type of solution that may be possible. It may involve other colleagues or more senior managers where appropriate. In cases where your complaint involves another colleague, the manager may suggest a conciliation meeting.

If this informal approach does not resolve your concern, or at any time following your initial informal complaint, you may ask to move to the formal procedure described below.

**Investigations**

In some cases it may be necessary for us to carry out an investigation into your grievance. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from you and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. The investigation may be carried out by your line manager or someone else appointed by us.

You must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending interviews, as part of our investigation.

We may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting where we consider this appropriate. In other cases we may hold a grievance meeting before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases we will hold a further grievance meeting with you after our investigation and before we reach a decision

**Step 1: Written Grievance**

Formal grievances should be put in writing and submitted to your manager. If the grievance concerns your manager it should be submitted to a member of the Board of Directors.

Your written grievance should set out the nature of your complaint, including any relevant facts, dates and names of individuals involved so that it can be investigated and confirmation of how you would like your complaint resolved.

**Step 2: Grievance Meeting**

Your manager will then arrange for a grievance meeting to be held as soon as reasonably practicable with you and you should make every effort to attend.

You may bring a companion to the grievance meeting as long as you make a reasonable request in advance and tell us the name of your chosen companion. This companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague. If your choice of companion is unreasonable, we may ask you to bring someone else. Colleagues who act as companions will be allowed reasonable paid time off from their duties to act as your companion. No colleague can be forced to act as a companion if they do not wish to do so.

If you or your companion cannot attend the grievance meeting at the time or date arranged, you should let us know as soon as possible and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

The purpose of a grievance meeting is to enable you to explain your grievance and how you think it should be resolved, and to assist the person hearing the grievance to reach a decision taking account of the facts.

Your companion at a grievance meeting may ask questions, but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may also confer with your companion at any time during the meeting.

The grievance meeting may be adjourned if further investigations are needed, after which the meeting will usually be reconvened.

The Company’s decision regarding your grievance will be confirmed to you in writing as soon as possible after the meeting and you will be notified of any further action that we intend to take to resolve your grievance.

You will have the right to appeal against the decision within one week of the outcome letter being received and this will normally be to the manager or the Chair of the Board of Directors, as appropriate.

**Step 3: Grievance Appeals**

We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal.

You will be given written notice of the date, time and place of the appeal hearing (which will normally be held within five working days of receipt of the letter).

The appeal will be dealt with impartially by a manager who has not previously been involved in your grievance. You will have a right to bring a companion to the appeal meeting (as outlined above).

The Company’s decision regarding your grievance will be confirmed to you in writing as soon as possible after the meeting and you will be notified of any further action that we intend to take to resolve your grievance.

**Step 4: Appeals to Board of Directors**

If the grievance appeal has not resolved your concerns to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing, stating the full grounds of your appeal, within one week of the date of the letter, to the Board of Directors.

We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal.

You will be given reasonable written notice of the date, time and place of the appeal hearing (which will normally be held within five working days of receipt of the letter). This will be dealt with impartially by the Board of Directors. You will have a right to bring a companion (as outlined above).

We will confirm our final decision in writing, as soon as possible after the appeal hearing. There is no further right of appeal.

**Date Completed: October 2023**

**Review Date: October 2024**

*This policy will be monitored in line with relevant legislation and good practice guidelines.*