

Bloom Childcare

Complaints Policy

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1. Policy Statement

Bloom Childcare is committed to providing high-quality, safe childcare across all its settings. Where children, parents, carers or other stakeholders have concerns or complaints, Bloom takes them seriously and deals with them promptly, fairly and confidentially.

This policy sets out how complaints are received, recorded, investigated and resolved. It meets the requirements of EYFS 2026 (paragraphs 3.12–3.14), the Childcare Act 2006 and Ofsted registration conditions.

A complaint is distinct from a day-to-day concern. Staff deal with routine concerns informally as they arise. This policy applies when a concern has not been resolved informally, or when the complainant wishes to make a formal complaint.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children attending any Bloom setting
- Parents, carers and those with parental responsibility
- Members of the public directly affected by Bloom's activities
- Any person making a complaint about a Bloom service, staff member or environment

Staff complaints and grievances are handled under Bloom's separate HR Grievance Policy and are not covered here.

3. Legal Framework

Legislation / Guidance	Reference	Relevance
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2026	Paragraphs 3.12–3.14	Providers must have a complaints procedure; keep written records for 3 years; inform Ofsted of qualifying complaints.
Childcare Act 2006	Section 34	Gives Ofsted the power to investigate complaints about registered providers.
Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974	Section 2	Complaints relating to safety are handled in line with the employer's duty of care.
Equality Act 2010	Section 13 / 15	Complaints must be handled without discrimination. Reasonable adjustments made for complainants with disabilities.
UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018	Article 5	Complaint records held securely; personal data processed lawfully and retained for 3 years minimum.
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023	Para 1–3	Complaints that disclose a safeguarding concern are referred to the DSL immediately, regardless of stage.
Ofsted Complaints Procedure	As applicable	Complainants may refer unresolved complaints to Ofsted. Contact details provided in this policy.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Concern	An informal expression of worry or dissatisfaction raised verbally or in writing, resolved without a formal process.

Complaint	A formal expression of dissatisfaction about Bloom's provision, a staff member, or the service received, which has not been resolved informally.
Complainant	The person making the complaint, or a person acting on their behalf with their consent.
EYFS complaint	A complaint that relates directly to the delivery of the EYFS. These must be reported to Ofsted under EYFS 2026 paragraph 3.101.
Anonymous complaint	Bloom will consider anonymous complaints where possible but cannot always guarantee a response or outcome.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Managing Director (Mark Johnson)

- Has overall responsibility for this policy and its review.
- Handles appeals and any complaint about an Area Manager.

Area Manager

- Handles Stage 3 complaints and any complaint about a Setting Manager – of a separate setting from their responsibility

Setting Manager

- First point of contact for Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints at their setting.
- Ensures complaints are acknowledged, investigated and responded to within the timescales in this policy.
- Maintains the complaints log for their setting.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Must be informed immediately if any complaint discloses or implies a safeguarding concern.
- Takes immediate action under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (B0027), regardless of the complaints stage.

All Staff

- Must not dismiss or discourage complaints.
- Refer any complaint immediately to the Setting Manager.
- Must not discuss complaints with other parents, carers or staff other than on a need-to-know basis.

6. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints must be made:

- By email to the Setting Manager

Bloom will make reasonable adjustments to assist complainants who have a disability, communication need or language barrier. An interpreter or advocate may be used where necessary.

The complainant may be accompanied at any meeting by a friend, family member or other supporter, provided that person is not a legal representative acting in a professional capacity.

7. Complaints Process

Stage 1	Informal resolution
Handled by:	Setting Manager (or an Area Manager if the complaint is about the Manager)
Timescale:	Acknowledged within 5 working days. Resolved within 28 working days.
Process:	The Setting Manager speaks with the complainant, investigates and attempts to resolve the matter. The outcome is confirmed in writing to the complainant (email).
If unresolved:	The complainant may escalate to Stage 2 within 3 working days of receiving the Stage 1 outcome.

Stage 2	Formal investigation
Handled by:	Setting Manager (or Area Manager if the complaint is about the Manager)
Timescale:	Acknowledged in writing within 5 working days. Full written response within 20 working days. If more time is needed, the complainant is informed and given a revised date.
Process:	A formal written complaint is submitted by the complainant. The Manager conducts a thorough investigation: reviewing records, speaking to relevant staff and the complainant, and considering any evidence. A written outcome is provided, setting out findings, the decision, and any action taken.
If unresolved:	The complainant may escalate to Stage 3 within 3 working days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome.

Stage 3	Appeal / escalation to MD
Handled by:	Area Manager
Timescale:	Acknowledged within 5 working days. Final written response within 28 working days.
Process:	The Area Manager reviews the complaint, the investigation and the Stage 2 outcome. The Area Manager may invite the complainant to a meeting. A final written decision is issued. This is Bloom's final internal stage.
External escalation:	If the complainant remains dissatisfied after Stage 3, and the complaint relates to the EYFS, they may refer the matter to Ofsted: www.gov.uk/complain-ofsted / 0300 123 1231.

8. Complaints Involving Safeguarding

Any complaint that contains or implies a safeguarding concern is referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately, regardless of the complaints stage. The DSL follows the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (B0027). The safeguarding referral takes priority and runs in parallel to, not instead of, the complaints process.

Where a complaint also triggers a RIDDOR report or an Ofsted notification, those obligations are met without delay and are not deferred pending the outcome of the complaints process.

9. Ofsted Notification Requirements

Under EYFS 2026 Bloom must keep a record of any complaint that relates to the requirements of the EYFS. Notification of a serious incident is made within 14 days of the complaint being received.

The MD is responsible for making Ofsted notifications. The following details are recorded at the time of notification: the nature of the complaint, the date received, the action taken, and the outcome.

Ofsted contact: www.gov.uk/complain-ofsted | 0300 123 1231

Ofsted notifications: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident>

10. Record Keeping

Bloom maintains a written Complaints Log at each setting. The log records:

- Date the complaint was received
- Name of complainant (or 'Anonymous' where applicable)
- Nature of the complaint
- Stage reached
- Actions taken and by whom
- Outcome and date of final response
- Whether Ofsted was notified
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All complaint records are retained for a minimum of three years from the date of the final response, in line with EYFS 2026 paragraph 3.101. Records are stored securely and are available to Ofsted inspectors on request.

Complaint records are personal data under UK GDPR. They are held securely, accessed only by authorised staff, and not shared beyond what is necessary to investigate and resolve the complaint.

11. Confidentiality

All complaints are handled with discretion. Information is shared only with those who need to know in order to investigate and resolve the complaint. Staff are reminded that discussing complaints with other parents, carers, other staff or outside of the setting is a breach of confidentiality and could result in disciplinary action.

Where a complaint is about a member of staff, that member of staff is informed of the complaint and given the opportunity to respond as part of the investigation. They are not told the identity of the complainant unless necessary.

12. Unreasonable Complaints

Bloom will make every effort to resolve complaints fairly. Where a complainant behaves in an unreasonable, threatening or abusive manner, Bloom reserves the right to:

- Require that contact is made in writing only
- Limit the number of contacts per week
- Terminate a meeting if conduct becomes abusive

Malicious complaints, or repeated complaints about matters already fully resolved, may be treated as closed without further investigation. The MD makes this determination and informs the complainant in writing.

13. Learning from Complaints

Complaints are discussed and monitored at Governance level.

Bloom treats every complaint as an opportunity to improve. The Area & Setting Managers review all complaints at least annually to identify:

- Recurring themes or issues
- Training needs
- Changes to policy, procedure or practice

Findings are reported to the MD and, where relevant, shared with staff. Actions arising from complaints are tracked through the H+S Actions Register (B0005).

14. Linked Documents

- B0000 – HSMS Document Register
- B0005 – H+S Actions Register
- B0007 – Accident / Incident Report Template
- B0027 – Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- B0028 – Health and Safety Policy
- B0033 – Confidentiality and Data Protection (GDPR) Policy

15. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the MD, or sooner following:

- Any significant complaint or cluster of complaints
- A change to EYFS statutory requirements or Ofsted guidance

- A safeguarding incident linked to a complaint
- Any Ofsted inspection finding relating to complaints handling

16. Policy Approval and Sign-Off

DECLARATION			
Role	Name	Signature	Date
Managing Director / Duty Holder	Mark Johnson		1 st October 2026