Complaints and Compliments Policy

Prepared	September 2026	**Review due**	September 2027 or sooner
Policy lead	Emma Johnson	**Role**	Manager
Safeguarding lead	Sarah Simmonds	**Role**	Deputy Manager and DSL
Approved by	Heydays Preschool Committee	**Applies to**	Families, visitors and professionals
Version	2.0	**Setting**	Heydays Preschool

Our commitment

Heydays welcomes feedback because it helps us protect children, strengthen relationships and improve our provision. We listen carefully, respond fairly and aim to resolve concerns as early as possible without defensiveness or blame.

A child or family will not be treated less favourably because they raise a concern or complaint in good faith. We will make reasonable adjustments so the process is accessible, and we will act immediately where information suggests that a child may be at risk.

How to raise a concern

- Start with your child's key person or a senior member of staff if this feels appropriate.
- Speak to or write to Emma Johnson, Manager, if the matter is serious, unresolved or you prefer to do so.
- If the complaint concerns the Manager, send it to the Committee Chair through the setting.
- Written complaints about how Heydays is meeting the EYFS will be investigated and the outcome provided within 28 days.
- Contact Ofsted if you believe Heydays is not meeting EYFS requirements. Urgent child-protection concerns should go straight to Children's Social Care or the police.

1 Purpose and scope

This policy explains how Heydays receives, records, investigates and learns from compliments, suggestions, concerns and complaints. It applies to parents, carers, prospective families, visitors and professionals connected with the setting.

It covers the care and education of children, communication, administration and the day-to-day operation of the preschool. It does not replace safeguarding, allegations against adults, whistleblowing, staff grievance or disciplinary procedures. The Manager will explain which route applies and avoid asking a person to repeat information unnecessarily.

The policy should be read with the Safeguarding and Child Protection, Allegations Against Adults, Whistleblowing, Staff Conduct, Parent Partnership, SEND, Positive Behaviour, Data Protection and Confidentiality policies.

2 Legal and statutory framework

This policy reflects the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective from 1 September 2026. The EYFS requires a written procedure for concerns and complaints from parents and carers, a written record of complaints and outcomes, investigation of written complaints about fulfilment of EYFS requirements, notification of the outcome within 28 days, and availability of records to Ofsted on request.

It also reflects the Childcare Act 2006, Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, Human Rights Act 1998 and safeguarding duties, together with later amendments or replacement guidance.

The procedure is intended to be fair, proportionate and child-centred. It does not prevent a person from contacting Ofsted, the local authority, police or another relevant body where they are entitled or need to do so.

3 Our principles

- Children's safety, welfare and best interests come first.
- People are listened to respectfully and told what will happen next.
- No one is disadvantaged for raising or supporting a concern in good faith.
- The person handling the complaint is sufficiently impartial and has no unmanaged conflict of interest.
- Information is shared only where there is a lawful or professional need.
- Outcomes and learning are recorded, acted on and reviewed.

4 What the terms mean

A compliment is positive feedback about a child’s experience, a member of staff or the setting. A suggestion is an idea for improvement. A concern is a worry or question that may be resolved through prompt discussion. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that needs a response, whether or not the word complaint is used.

A complaint may be made verbally, in writing, by email or through an agreed accessible method. For the statutory EYFS investigation and 28-day outcome requirement, a complaint about fulfilment of EYFS requirements should be put in writing. Staff will help a person record it where needed.

Anonymous complaints are considered on the information available. The setting may be unable to report a detailed outcome, but will assess any risk and take appropriate action. A concern raised by or on behalf of a child is listened to in a developmentally appropriate way and recorded where necessary.

5 Accessibility and support

A person may ask for support from an advocate, interpreter, friend or family member. Heydays will consider reasonable adjustments such as an alternative format, additional time, a private meeting, communication support or help to set out the complaint. A child should not routinely interpret sensitive information for an adult.

The Manager will check what outcome the complainant is seeking and explain any limits on what can be shared about another child, family or member of staff. A withdrawal does not prevent Heydays from continuing enquiries where there is a safeguarding, welfare, regulatory or employment concern.

6 Stage 1 - early and informal resolution

Most day-to-day concerns are best raised promptly with the child's key person or a senior member of staff. The staff member listens, clarifies the concern, notes any immediate action and tells the Manager where the matter is significant, repeated, unresolved or outside their authority.

The Manager may speak with relevant people, check records and agree a response or practical remedy. The setting aims to respond promptly, but a person may move directly to a formal written complaint where the matter is serious, they are uncomfortable using the informal route or it has not resolved the issue.

7 Stage 2 - formal written complaint

A formal complaint should be addressed to Emma Johnson, Manager, at admin@heydayspreschool.com or the setting address. It should say what happened, when, who was involved, any action already taken and the outcome sought. Lack of detail will not be used to dismiss a complaint; the Manager may ask proportionate questions to understand it.

Heydays will acknowledge receipt, normally within five working days, identify who will investigate and explain any immediate safeguarding or confidentiality considerations. The investigator will gather relevant evidence, speak with people as appropriate, keep a clear chronology and consider each point fairly. The complainant may provide supporting information and will be told if the scope or timescale needs clarification.

For a written complaint about how Heydays is fulfilling the EYFS requirements, the complainant will be notified of the outcome within 28 calendar days of receipt. This statutory timescale remains the backstop even where a meeting or external advice is required. Other complaints will also be answered as promptly as reasonably possible.

8 Written outcome and remedy

The response will normally summarise the issues considered, the steps taken, the findings for each main point, whether the complaint is upheld in full, in part or not upheld, and any action or review. Information about children, families or staff will be protected and disciplinary details will not normally be disclosed.

Where something has gone wrong, the remedy may include an apology, explanation, correction, practical action, review of support, staff guidance or training, supervision, a change to practice or policy, or monitoring. An apology acknowledges impact and responsibility where appropriate; it does not prevent safeguarding, employment or regulatory action.

9 Stage 3 - review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they should explain which part of the response they believe was not addressed or was procedurally unfair. An uninvolved Committee representative will review the handling, evidence and response and may arrange a meeting. This stage is a review of the complaint process and outcome, not automatically a complete reinvestigation.

The reviewer will write with their conclusion and any further action. Internal review does not extend the EYFS requirement to provide the original investigation outcome within 28 days and does not restrict the complainant's right to contact Ofsted or another appropriate body.

10 Complaints about leaders or the Committee

A complaint about the Manager should be addressed to the Committee Chair through admin@heydayspreschool.com or the setting address and marked private and confidential. The Chair will appoint an impartial investigator or reviewer and keep the Manager separate from decisions about the complaint as far as reasonably possible.

A complaint about the Committee Chair will be handled by another uninvolved Committee member or suitable independent person. A complaint involving several leaders will be allocated so that no person decides a complaint about their own conduct. External safeguarding or professional advice will be obtained where needed.

11 Safeguarding and allegations about adults

Any information suggesting that a child may be suffering or at risk of harm is passed immediately to Sarah Simmonds, Deputy Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead, or to Lynne Funnell, Deputy DSL, if Sarah is unavailable. Immediate danger is reported to the police on 999. A person does not need to complete the complaints process before reporting a safeguarding concern.

An allegation, low-level concern or concern about the conduct or suitability of a person working or volunteering with children is managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection and Allegations Against Adults procedures. The setting may seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer, Children's Social Care, Ofsted or the police and must not investigate in a way that compromises a statutory or criminal process.

The ordinary complaints process may be paused, adapted or limited while another process is active. The complainant will be told as much as can lawfully and safely be shared. The safeguarding outcome and the service complaint are coordinated but recorded under the appropriate procedures.

12 Ofsted and other external routes

Parents and carers may contact Ofsted if they believe Heydays is not meeting EYFS or registration requirements. Ofsted's role is to consider regulatory compliance and take action where necessary; it cannot resolve individual disputes between a family and the provider and may expect the setting's procedure to have been used first.

Ofsted can be contacted at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk, 0300 123 4666 or https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-childcare. Ofsted may inspect, require action or work with other agencies, but does not normally tell the complainant the outcome of a childcare complaint.

Where a concern is about a funded entitlement, SEND service, data protection matter, employment issue or another body's decision, the Manager will signpost the relevant route where known. This will not be used to divert a complaint that Heydays itself should answer.

13 Compliments suggestions and feedback

Compliments and suggestions may be shared with the key person, Manager or by email. They are passed to the people concerned, recorded where useful and considered through staff meetings, supervision, parent partnership and policy review.

Heydays will not publish a compliment that identifies a child, family or member of staff without appropriate consent. Positive feedback is used alongside concerns and complaints to understand what families value and what should be sustained or developed.

14 Records confidentiality and retention

The complaints record includes the date and source, issues raised, desired outcome, risk or safeguarding decisions, people involved, evidence considered, investigation and review activity, findings, response date, actions, completion checks and learning. A brief record is made even where a concern is resolved informally if it is significant, repeated or relevant to a child's welfare.

Records are factual, respectful, securely stored and accessible only to people with a right or professional need. Information may be shared with Ofsted, the local authority, police, insurers, legal advisers or another body where required or lawful. Complete confidentiality cannot be promised.

Formal complaint records and outcomes are retained for at least three years from the date the record is made, and longer where the setting's retention schedule, safeguarding needs, insurance, litigation or another legal requirement applies. A record of complaints is available to Ofsted on request.

15 Respectful communication and persistent contact

Heydays will not treat a complaint as unreasonable merely because it is strongly expressed, repeated, difficult or not upheld. Staff remain professional and consider disability, distress, language and communication needs.

Threats, harassment, discriminatory abuse or contact that seriously prevents the setting from carrying out its duties may lead to proportionate communication arrangements, such as one named contact, agreed channels or meeting boundaries. The reasons, duration and review date will be explained. Legitimate new concerns, safeguarding information and access to Ofsted or emergency services will not be blocked.

16 Learning monitoring and review

The Manager checks that agreed actions are completed and reviews complaints, concerns, compliments and suggestions for themes, recurrence, barriers to access and impact on particular children or groups. Personal information is removed from reports unless identification is necessary and lawful.

Relevant learning is shared with staff through supervision, meetings, training and policy review. The Committee receives proportionate oversight information and checks that timescales, safeguarding referrals and improvement actions are followed.

This policy is reviewed at least annually and sooner after a significant complaint, a change in law or guidance, Ofsted feedback, a safeguarding learning review or evidence that the procedure is not accessible or effective.

17 Roles and responsibilities

Who	Responsibility
Committee	Approves the policy, provides oversight, appoints an impartial handler where necessary and checks that learning and actions are completed.
Manager - Emma Johnson	Receives and coordinates complaints, protects fairness and confidentiality, ensures the 28-day EYFS outcome and reports themes to the Committee.
DSL - Sarah Simmonds	Leads safeguarding action where a complaint indicates risk or harm and advises on referrals, information sharing and safe handling.
Deputy DSL - Lynne Funnell	Supports safeguarding action and acts when the DSL is unavailable.
SENCO - Kerri Lancaster Oliver	Supports accessible communication and responds where a complaint concerns SEND support or reasonable adjustments.
All staff	Listen, record and pass on concerns promptly; preserve evidence; maintain confidentiality; cooperate with enquiries; and carry out agreed learning.
Committee Chair	Handles or commissions investigation of complaints about the Manager and ensures conflicts of interest are managed.

18 Setting and external contacts

Contact	Details
Setting	Heydays Preschool, c/o Four Marks Primary School, Kitwood Road, Four Marks, Alton, GU34 5AS
Email	admin@heydayspreschool.com
Manager	Emma Johnson - contact through the setting
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sarah Simmonds - contact through the setting
Deputy DSL	Lynne Funnell - contact through the setting
SENCO	Kerri Lancaster Oliver - contact through the setting
Ofsted childcare complaints	https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-childcare | enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk | 0300 123 4666
Immediate danger	Police - 999
Non-emergency police	101

19 Document approval

Approved by	Valerie Lucas	**Date**	September 2026
Signature		**Next review**	September 2027
Amendment	Version 2.0 - rewritten and updated for the September 2026 EYFS	**Date**	September 2026