



Safe Hands Afterschool Club

Allegations and Complaints Policy



Approved by: Melanie Lawlee

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1. Policy Statement

Safe Hands Afterschool Club aims to provide high-quality care in a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment. The club is committed to listening and responding to feedback, concerns, complaints, and allegations relating to its operation or the conduct of adults working within it.

We follow the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework 2025** and relevant statutory guidance when addressing concerns about compliance with EYFS and serious allegations.

We value working in partnership with parents and carers and encourage feedback in order to continuously improve our service.

2. Legal & Statutory Framework

This policy reflects:

- The **EYFS statutory framework 2025** – requiring providers to have written procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints and to keep written records of complaints and their outcomes
 - **Ofsted and government expectations** that providers must be able to respond to complaints, investigate fairly, and within stated timescales
 - **Safeguarding obligations** to follow statutory procedures where allegations are made about an adult's behaviour and the requirement to liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate
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3. Definitions

- **Concern:** An expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important by a parent/carer, child, staff member, or member of the public
 - **Complaint:** A formal expression of dissatisfaction with a setting's service, actions, or lack of action
 - **Allegation:** A report that an adult working or volunteering at the club may have behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children (e.g., abuse, neglect, inappropriate conduct)
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4. Responsibilities

Management will:

- Ensure that complaints and allegations are dealt with fairly, consistently, and promptly
- Maintain confidential records of any complaints and their outcomes
- Ensure adults working with children understand and comply with this policy

Staff (including volunteers) will:

- Be aware of this policy and how to respond to concerns raised by parents, carers, or colleagues
- Report allegations immediately to the leadership team

Parents/Carers and Families:

- Are encouraged to raise concerns as early as possible so that issues can be resolved promptly and informally where possible

5. Principles of Handling Complaints and Allegations

5.1 Open & Accessible

We ensure everyone knows how to make a complaint or raise a concern

5.2 Confidentiality

We treat all information as confidential where appropriate while ensuring safeguarding obligations are met

5.3 Timely Response

We aim to respond to complaints within clear and reasonable timescales at each stage of the process

5.4 Records

Written records of all complaints and their resolution must be kept on file and be available for inspection by Ofsted or other regulators if required

6. Complaints Procedure (General Concerns)

6.1 Informal Stage

- Parents/carers are encouraged to raise concerns verbally with the Manager or designated person in the first instance
- Complaints about individual staff members may initially be discussed directly with the staff member, if appropriate



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- Most concerns should be resolved informally and swiftly at this stage
- Notes of discussions and resolution attempts should be recorded

6.2 Formal Stage

Step 1: Lodge Written Complaint

- Complaints should be made in writing (letter or email) to the Manager
- The complaint should outline the issue, relevant dates, and the outcome sought

Step 2: Acknowledge & Investigate

- A written acknowledgement will be sent within 5–7 working days of receipt
- The complaint will be investigated by someone not directly involved if possible
- The investigation will be completed and a written response provided within 28 days, including findings and any actions to be taken
- Parents/carers may be invited to a meeting to discuss the outcome

Step 3: Escalation

- If unresolved, complainants can request a review by the Provider or Board
- If still not satisfied, parents/carers may contact Ofsted

Ofsted Contact:

- Address: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
 - General Enquiries: 0300 123 1231
 - Complaints: 0300 123 4666
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7. Record-Keeping and Outcomes

If a child makes an allegation or discloses abuse against an adult or another child:

- Stay calm and listen carefully
- Reassure the child that they did the right thing
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions
- Let the child know you will need to tell someone else
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Inform the **Safeguarding Designated Officer** immediately
- Make a written record using the Safeguarding Report Form, signed, dated, and recording your position

Other record-keeping:

- Incident sheets for any concerning behaviour changes
- Complaint logs, investigation outcomes, actions taken, and any learning identified



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- Records retained for a minimum period consistent with regulations and available to inspectors
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8. Allegations Against Adults (Staff/Volunteers)

Allegations must be referred immediately to **Mel Lawlee (Designated Safeguarding Lead)** or the Deputy in her absence.

8.1 Immediate Response

- Allegations involving harm, criminal offences, or unsuitability to work with children will trigger immediate action
- Adults may be suspended pending investigation

8.2 LADO Notification

- LADO is contacted without delay to advise on next steps, safeguarding, and whether police or social care involvement is required

8.3 Internal Action

- Manager/DSL liaises with LADO and relevant agencies
- Secure records of allegation, actions, and outcomes
- Maintain confidentiality in line with safeguarding and GDPR

8.4 Protection of Children and Adults

- Prioritise immediate safety of children
- Support children, families, and staff involved
- Avoid unnecessary delays in investigation

Whistleblowing

Safe Hands Afterschool Club is committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty, and accountability. All staff, volunteers, and any individuals working on behalf of the club have a duty to raise concerns about poor practice, wrongdoing, or safeguarding issues.

Whistleblowing is the process of reporting concerns about unsafe, illegal, or unethical conduct within the setting. This may include concerns about:

- safeguarding or welfare of children
- conduct of staff or volunteers
- health and safety risks
- failure to comply with legal or professional obligations
- attempts to conceal any of the above



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Concerns should be raised as soon as possible with the Club Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Melanie Lawlee. If the concern involves the manager or DSL, or if the individual feels unable to report internally, concerns can be raised directly with external agencies such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted, or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline.

All concerns will be taken seriously and handled sensitively and confidentially. The club will:

- listen to and record concerns carefully
- investigate appropriately and without delay
- take necessary action to protect children and others
- support the individual raising the concern

No member of staff or volunteer will be treated unfairly or suffer detriment for raising a genuine concern, even if it is not ultimately upheld. This is in line with the protections provided under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Malicious or knowingly false allegations may be subject to disciplinary procedures whilst failure to report conduct that places children at risk is a disciplinary offence

NSPCC Helpline: 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk

9. Communication with Families & Staff

- Policy is displayed on the premises at all times
 - Families are informed of complaint procedures at enrolment and on request
 - Staff and volunteers receive induction training on responding to and reporting concerns
 - Parents may request a summary of complaints and outcomes
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10. Monitoring and Review

- Reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes
 - Reviewed after any complaint or allegation incident
 - Reviewed by Manager and Safeguarding Lead
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11. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Staff Behaviour Policy



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- Record-Keeping and GDPR / Data Protection Policies