

From: P01 P01
To: Guardian Childcare & Education Allara Street; EDU Complaints CECA; P03
Subject: Formal Letter of Complaint and Cessation of Services - Attention of Centre Manager P01 P01
Date: Tuesday, 28 November 2023 6:09:20 AM

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For the attention of Centre Manager P01 P01 Guardian Childcare and Education Corporate Services and the Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA).

From P01P01 and P01 P01

Be advised that P01 P01 and P01 P01 will not be attending Guardian Childcare and Education Allara Street effective immediately, Tuesday 28 November 2023.

We no longer trust the services you offer or that our children will not be put at risk in your care. Over the past year, we have been in constant communication with your centre regarding the care of our son P01. We receive multiple calls a week about P01's behaviour in the Preschool room. He cannot go more than a day without you sending him home. In every discussion held, we were kind, patient and respectful to you. We listened to your concerns, we communicated our concerns, and strived to work with you, to ensure P01 thrived at Guardian Childcare and Education Allara Street.

We repeatedly asked you if other children in the class are having similar challenges, or if this is a developmental stage. You have consistently advised "we have not had any other children experience this" or "we have only had one other child go through this". We repeatedly asked if you could speak to the parents of the other child to discuss what can be learned from how they support their child. At our meeting on Monday 6 November 2023, you stated you would reach out on our behalf. This never occurred.

On Thursday 23 November 2023 we received a call to pick P01 up as sadly a classmate was injured when he was "heightened" and your team could not calm him down. When P01 arrived, she was understandably distressed by what happened. She was worried about P01 and his injured classmate. She did not question what led to the situation. She remained focussed on the wellbeing of our son. She should have questioned you. She wanted to understand what your team had done to support P01 that day. Instead, she trusted you and let you tell her that P01 was going through something that you had not experienced with children his age. To further aggravate the situation, P01 stated plainly that you "can't support P01 anymore". P01 regrets not challenging you on this statement. We regret continuing to trust your advice, especially over the course of the last year. Not only is what P01 experiencing age and developmentally appropriate, but there are several students attending your centre going through the exact same stage, and suffering the same treatment and misguidance. We disregarded your advice and got in contact with other parents from the centre. To our horror, every parent provided a similar account. They told us their happy child was unruly or problematic in your care. They told us they felt pressed to seeking paediatric help. They told us they were made to feel isolated, harassed by the constant phone calls, and concerned by their child being sent home regularly.

Your actions isolated us and sought to prevent us from seeking support from others who were experiencing the same issues. We have been fortunate enough now to realise your service is

incapable of supporting our children as they grow and develop emotionally, in particular as P01 prepares for primary school. P01 has been emotionally harmed by your choices and we hold concerns for his development as he starts to associate with children from outside your care. He has multiple daily toileting accidents in your care, but rarely in any other setting. He shies away from new adults and children, despite having been a social extrovert his entire life. He now comes home and says "Guardian is mad at me" or "I don't want to go to Guardian – it scares me". He has nightmares about going to your centre. As teachers; you have successfully scared a four-year-old boy away from his friends and education.

Since his enrolment in your centre, we have consistently informed and supported your team regarding P01's P05

P05

The simplest solution has always been to help him find a quiet space to calm down before he rejoins his classmates. When given a few minutes to breathe, he almost always settles and is able to participate again. In recent months we have provided headphones to help prevent this. Despite his health issue having been present since his admission as an infant at 8-months-old, the safeguards we have discussed and support mechanisms suggested have been disregarded. We have asked his teachers what is being done, and the responses have never included providing his headphones or a quiet space. The response instead has been to go against our advice and engage him further, to forcibly remove him, or to push him towards more strenuous activities resulting in further aggravation.

In recent months we have repeatedly flagged our suspicion that our son may be neurodivergent. Whilst there has been no professional diagnosis provided, P01 provided your team with perspective from lived experience and observations. We have continued to liaise with you while we seek professional support, despite this being almost unobtainable for children before they reach school age due to the difficulty differentiating between neurodivergent and neurotypical children of his age. To assist your team, we attended meetings and agreed on ways to support him that were both age appropriate and helpful to his whole class. The management plan you created after this meeting states that in order to support P01 your team would "Create spaces for me to be alone and feel cosy - but where adults can still see me", "Support me to play in small group play" and provide "hold space" and "engagement with sensory experiences". You also stated that you would "Ensure we are following parent's suggestions and they are aware of how we are putting it into place". To date we have not received any confirmation that the strategies suggested were used. The conversations held with your staff tell us that you have completely ignored our advice, and to the best of our knowledge failed in any meaningful way to support our child when it mattered most. You chose instead to use methods that would upset any person, child or not, and then act as though our child is problematic for reacting to you. Our summation of this experience is Guardian Childcare and Education Allara Street is incapable of meeting the needs of their Preschool children. You choose to label any child who does not meet your expectations as naughty and utilise methods that are contrary to advice given in an attempt to control the children you have. When this fails you wait until something goes wrong and send the child home so you don't have to concern yourselves with them. Sometimes this incident is serious, sometimes it is benign such as throwing their hats over the fence. It seems you are more concerned with seeking ways to send children home from your care than helping them.

In this email both the Guardian complaints line and the CECA authority have been included. If our own experiences and those shared with us are consistent with the care being provided at large, then we hold genuine concern for any child in your care; in particular those who are

neurodivergent or display similar needs. You chose not to support our son. We attended meetings, impromptu talks, reviewed your management plan, provided support equipment and sensory toys. Whatever you requested we accommodated, but none of it was used. At no time were your staff provided our advice or made privy to our requests, and if they were it was ignored. It does not matter whether **P01** is neurodivergent or developing in ways similar to others his age. You either chose to discriminate against him and deny him actual support, or you are incapable of working with children at this stage in their life. Neither option is acceptable in your profession.

Do not charge us any further for the costs associated with your providing care for our children. You have acknowledged by both word and inaction that “you can't support” the contract held with us. Given that your services are paid for in advance with deposit, we demand the contract be immediately ceased.

P01 has a right to education, to go to school and feel safe. You are his teachers; you are tasked with dedicating yourselves to his education, support and care whilst in your charge. You have a legal and moral obligation to protect and support him. When he or those around him are harmed because of your failures, then that is your neglectful behaviour. You disregarded the information supplied to you at every step. You opted to continue on whatever path you felt was easiest, without regard to the children affected by your choices. To cover yourselves, you employed strategies to isolate and shame, separating us from others experiencing the same challenges. We are horrified and humiliated for ever trusting you with our children. We will worry every day that the people we trust our children to will fail them as you have. We worry our son's view of education is irreparably damaged and that is your fault.

We hope that both the broader Guardian company and the CECA review your operation. These gross failures in care cannot be allowed to continue.

Do not contact us by phone. Any further communication will be done in writing. We are not interested in a narrative employed to explain away these failures. The only resolution with value is proof that other families will not be treated the way you have treated ours. We treated you with trust, kindness and patience. You have not shown us the same respect.

Regards

P01P01 and **P01 P01**

An anecdote about the “problematic” child you decided was not worth helping.

P01 and **P01** were in the car on the weekend. On the way his little brother became quite upset and started to cry in the seat next to him. Despite the noise, he reached out, held his brother's hand and wiped away his tears. He was not concerned with how the noises made him feel, he only wanted to help his brother. At our destination, there were a number of other children who yelled, played and ran. Not dissimilar to a day at childcare. He was happy. He did not take unnecessary risks. He did not fight, throw things or go from zero to one hundred as so often stated by your team. He was a typical happy child, playing with friends and enjoying himself. Something we realise was always true, just not with Guardian Childcare and Education Allara Street. This wonderful, happy and empathetic child is **P01**, when he is in a place that supports and accepts him.