Complaints Policy

To be reviewed Annually.
Policy Agreed November 2026. To be reviewed November 2027.



Everton Nursery School and Family Centre

Aim

Everton Nursery School and Family Centre aim to provide high quality education with care for all children at all times. The school/centre aims to offer a welcome to each individual child and family and to provide a warm and caring environment within which all children can learn and develop as they play and explore.

The school/centre believes that children and parents/carers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt careful attention to their needs and wishes. The school/centre staff aim to work in partnership with parents (see parental partnership policy) and the community and welcome suggestions on how to improve the school/centre provision at any time.

Any parent/carer who wishes to express their dissatisfaction about any aspect of the school/centre provision should bring it to the attention of the Headteacher/Head of Centre or any member of the Leadership Team. If this does not have a satisfactory outcome within a reasonable period of time (3 months of time), or if the problem reoccurs, the parent/carer should put their concerns or complaint in writing (see complaints form) and request a meeting with the Headteacher/Head of Centre and/or the Chair of the Governing Body. Both parents and the Headteacher/Head of Centre can have a friend, partner or colleague present if required and an agreed written record of the discussion should be made and signed by both parties.

This policy is formulated in conjunction with the DfE School Complaints Toolkit 2014 and the Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2020 (Updated 15 January 2021).
Please also read: https://www.parentkind.org.uk/assets/parents-resources/Parent-Guide-to-School-Complaints.pdf

Introduction: Since the 1st September 2003 governing bodies (GBs) of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools in England have been required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, summarised in Annex A, to have in place a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. This does not limit complainants to parents or carers of children registered at a school. A complainant could be a member of the wider community or representing an ex-pupil. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised. The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Everton Nursery School and Family Centre about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'.

A complaint may be defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Everton Nursery School and Family Centre takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Assistant Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Everton Nursery School and Family Centre will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or Headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher/Head of Centre, Dr. Lesley Curtis OBE via the school office**.** Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher/Head of Centre should be addressed to Elizabeth Williams, the (Chair of Governors), via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to Hannah Chapman (Clerk to the Governing Body) via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales (work days) Non-school/centre working days are not part re closure times.

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services run by Everton Nursery School and Family Centre, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Liverpool Local Authority.

• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
• Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions. **complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.*
• Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education, depending on the substance of your complaint.
• Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
• Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.

• EYFS - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Everton Nursery School and Family Centre in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Everton Nursery School and Family Centre wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

Everton Nursery School and Family Centre is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure.

The prime aim of Everton Nursery School and Family Centre's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

Everton Nursery School and Family Centre Policy has four main stages. In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 (informal): concern heard by an appropriate staff member
- Stage 2 (formal): complaint heard by Headteacher
- Stage 3 (formal): complaint heard by Chair of Governors

• Stage 4 (formal): complaint heard by GB's complaints appeal panel.

Stage 1 – concern heard by staff member
Concerns can be raised with the school and family centre at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The school/centre requests that parents/carers make their first contact with their child's class teacher or in the children's centre the staff member running the group session. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to or call the school/centre within 10 school working days. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 – complaint heard by Headteacher.
The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. The Headteacher will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school/centre working days of receiving it and a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. Following the investigation, the Headteacher will aim to provide a written response within 10 school/centre working days of sending the acknowledgement. However, if a complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to a maximum of 20 school/centre working days. The school/centre will provide you details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay. If you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call the school/centre within 10 school working days of getting our response. The school/centre will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 3 – complaint heard by Chair of Governors If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2 or the complaint is about the Headteacher, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors c/o the school/centre. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school/centre working days of receiving it and a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. Following an investigation, the Chair of Governors will aim to provide a written response within 10 school/centre working days of sending out the acknowledgement. However, if a complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to 20 school/centre working days. The school/centre will provide you details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you will need to let the school/centre know within 10 school/centre working days of getting the response. The school/centre will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 4 – complaint heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel. If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the Clerk of Governors giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before the appeal panel. Should the Chair have been involved at any previous stage in the process a nominated Governor, impartial to

the complaint, will convene a complaints panel. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 school/centre working days of receiving it. The hearing will normally take place within 20 school/centre working days of sending the acknowledgment. The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school/centre and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within 5 school/centre working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further. The Governors appeal hearing is the last school/centre-based stage of the complaints process.

If the matter is still unresolved to the parents/carers satisfaction then they should read the following from Liverpool local authority website on making a complaint about a school https://liverpool.gov.uk/contact-us/complaints-and-feedback/make-a-complaint-about-a-school/

Make a complaint about a school

How to raise a concern or make a complaint:
Any concerns you have about your child's education can normally be settled by speaking to the headteacher or other member of staff. You can do this in person, in writing or over the phone.

They will take your concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible. If you are not sure who to speak to, contact the school office.

You should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints – they have no power to act on an individual basis and it may prevent them from considering formal complaints later on.

If the issue has not been resolved and you wish to make a formal complaint, you should refer to the school's complaints procedure. You will find this on the school website or contact your school office to request a copy.

Formal complaint
The school complaints procedure will tell you how to make a formal complaint. This is usually by completing a complaint form or writing a letter. You should make it clear:

- Why you are complaining.
- Who you have spoken to already.
- What you want to happen as a result of your complaint.

Complaints about school staff should be addressed to the headteacher.

Complaints about the headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, governors or Governing Body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body.

All correspondence should be sent via the school office and marked 'private and confidential'.

Anonymous complaints
Schools do not investigate anonymous complaints unless the headteacher or Chair of Governors thinks it is appropriate.

How long will it take to deal with a formal complaint?
Timescales for dealing with formal complaints are detailed in the school complaints procedure for each stage.

The headteacher or Governing Body will acknowledge receipt of the complaint by letter or email. They will keep a written record of any meetings or interviews in relation to their investigation and keep you up to date with timescales.

They will tell you how and when to escalate the complaint to stage 2 if you are not satisfied with the outcome of stage 1.

What can I do if I am not happy with the school's and governing body's responses?
Providing you have followed the school complaints procedure, then follow:
https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/state-schools or write to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0370 000 2288
Web: www.gov.uk/dfe

The DfE will not normally overturn any decisions made by the school but they will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint they can do so at any time and at any stage, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

This policy was reviewed by a group of governors at the PFR Committee in November 2026, to be ratified in January 2027 by the full Governing Body.

Everton Nursery School and Family Centre

Parent / Carer/ Visitor Comment / Complaint Form

Name ……..

Child's / Children's Name ……..

Date of Birth ……..

Comments taken by ……

Comments made by ……

Parent / Carer / Visitor details ……

Nature of comments / complaints:

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Action (s) suggested:

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Remedial action taken:

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Parent / Carer / Visitor signature: …… Date: ……

Leadership / Staff signature: …… Date: ……

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
  - consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve

problems.

The headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Complaints Co-ordinator (this could be the headteacher / designated complaints governor or other staff member providing administrative support)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
  - sharing third party information
  - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

Clerk to the Governing Body

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

Committee Chair

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.

  If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting
- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so

  No governor may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant

We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting

  Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.

- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting

  Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.

  The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.

  If the child/young person is the complainant, the committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.

  However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.