

Complaints procedure for

BARNET EARLY YEARS ALLIANCE (BEYA)

This complaints procedure was last updated July 2026 and is subject to annual review and approval by BEYA's governing body.

- Roles and responsibilities are set out at [Appendix A](#)
- Complaint Form is set out at [Appendix B](#)

1. Who can make a complaint?

- 1.1. 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 BEYA about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.
- 1.2. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure to handle complaints as described below.

2. The difference between a concern and a complaint

- 2.1. A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.
- 2.2. A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.
- 2.3. 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 complaint procedure. BEYA takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to investigate the matter promptly, with a view to resolving it appropriately.
- 2.4. If you have a concern, speak to your child's Key Person. If you are unable to resolve your concern or feel uncomfortable discussing the matter with them, please contact the Headteacher. The Headteacher may involve other appropriate members of staff in looking into the concern where necessary to ensure the matter is considered fairly and appropriately.

3. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

- 3.1. A concern can be made in person, in writing or by telephone with a child's key worker or another member of staff. If it cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint may then be raised in writing to the Headteacher.

- 3.2. Concerns should be raised with either a child's key worker or another member of staff. Any concern if still unresolved, may be raised with the Headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint in writing (Appendix B).
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to Kelly Brooker the Headteacher via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.
- 3.5. Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, by email to egriffiths@beya.org.uk. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.
- 3.6. Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body by email: hello@ldngov.co.uk. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.
- 3.7. For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at [Appendix B](#). If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office.
- 3.8. Complaints should be raised through the complaints procedure so that concerns can be considered fairly, appropriately and confidentially. All parties are expected to communicate respectfully throughout the process. To protect the privacy and wellbeing of children, families and staff, confidential or potentially identifying information relating to complaints should not be shared on social media or other public platforms.
- 3.9. 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.

4. Anonymous complaints

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

5. Time scales

- 5.1. 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.

6. Complaints received outside of term time

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

7. Scope of this Complaints Procedure

- 7.1. This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by BEYA 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 Barnet Council
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. <i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i>
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 (see link above), 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.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

- 7.2. 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.
- 7.3. If a complainant commences legal action against BEYA or any BEYA nursery or staff member or governor at BEYA 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.

8. Resolving complaints

- 8.1. At each stage in the procedure, BEYA wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge whether the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, in order to resolve the complaint, if it is appropriate 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.

9. Withdrawal of a Complaint

- 9.1. If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

10. Stage 1

- 10.1. Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone.

- 10.2. The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.
- 10.3. Within this response, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Headteacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.
- 10.4. *Note: The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but will not usually delegate the decision to be taken unless there are exceptional circumstances.*
- 10.5. During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will:
 - if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
 - keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.
- 10.6. At the conclusion of their investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within 20 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.
- 10.7. If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.
- 10.8. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions BEYA will take to resolve the complaint.
- 10.9. The Headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.
- 10.10. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.
- 10.11. Complaints about the Headteacher or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk to the Governing Body by email to hello@ldngov.co.uk.
- 10.12. If the complaint is:
 - jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
 - the entire governing body or
 - the majority of the governing body
- 10.13. Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

11. Stage 2

- 11.1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of three, impartial, governors identified by the Chair of Governors (unless the Stage 1 complaint is about the Chair of Governors, in which case the governors will be identified by the Clerk). This is the final stage of the complaint procedure.
- 11.2. A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk to the Governing Body via email: hello@ldngov.co.uk or the Chair of Governors at egriffiths@beya.org.uk, within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.
- 11.3. Where a complainant requests escalation to a complaints panel, they will be asked to set out in writing the grounds for their request, including the aspects of the complaint they remain dissatisfied with and the outcome they are seeking.
- 11.4. This is to assist the panel in understanding the scope of the complaint and ensuring a fair and proportionate hearing.
- 11.5. Where this information is not clearly provided, the Clerk will make reasonable efforts to seek clarification; however, this will not prevent the complaint from being considered at the next stage.
- 11.6. The Clerk or Chair will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.
- 11.7. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.
- 11.8. The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting which may take place virtually if requested by any party. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.
- 11.9. If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.
- 11.10. The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement in and who are not the subject of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from BEYA available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through their LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2

- 11.11. If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.
- 11.12. *Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.*
- 11.13. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- 11.14. At least 10 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:
- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
 - request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting.
- 11.15. Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.
- 11.16. The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.
- 11.17. The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

12. Remit of the Complaints Committee

- 12.1. The purpose of the complaints committee is to review the handling and outcome of the complaint at the previous stage(s) and to determine whether the complaint has been dealt with appropriately and fairly. The panel will consider the matters raised by the complainant, including any specific grounds for escalation, and will assess:
- whether the correct procedures were followed;
 - whether the decision reached was reasonable in light of the evidence available; and
 - whether any further action or remedy is required.

- 12.2. The panel does not normally reinvestigate the complaint in full or consider new issues that have not previously been raised, except where this is necessary in the interests of fairness. The panel may, however, consider whether there were shortcomings in the way the complaint was handled and whether these had a material impact on the outcome.
- 12.3. Following its consideration, the panel may:
 - uphold the complaint in whole or in part
 - dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- 12.4. If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:
 - decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
 - where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.
- 12.5. The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and BEYA with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days.
- 12.6. The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by BEYA.
- 12.7. If the complaint is:
 - jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
 - the entire governing body or
 - the majority of the governing body
- 12.8. Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent governors.
- 12.9. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions BEYA will take to resolve the complaint.

13. Next Steps

- 13.1. If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.
- 13.2. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by BEYA. They will consider whether BEYA

has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

- 13.3. The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

Appendix A: 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

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.
- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality, safeguarding requirements or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or UK GDPR.

- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, 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 material involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk

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 prior involvement in the complaint or the circumstances surrounding it. For the avoidance of doubt, a governor may sit on the committee if they are a parent of a child at the same BEYA nursery school as the complainant.
- 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.
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

13

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: