The Lloyd Williamson Nurseries

Complaints Procedure

2026-2027

Updated by Lucy Meyer
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Complaints should be raised to either Ramona Cristea or Lucy Meyer
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Aims

Lloyd Williamson Nurseries aim to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of pupils at the nurseries, and others.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- Ensure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into nursery improvement evaluation processes

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

The nurseries will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.

To support this, we will ensure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the nurseries' website.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements of section 29 of the Education Act 2002, which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

It is also based on guidance for schools on complaints procedures from the Department for Education (DfE), including the model procedure, and model procedure for dealing with unreasonable complaints.

Definitions and scope

1.Definitions

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:

- A **concern** is defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought"
- A **complaint** is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action"

2.Scope

Lloyd Williamson Nurseries intend to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage.

There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

This policy does **not** cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) about the school's support are within the scope of this policy. Such complaints should first be made to the SENCO; Lucy Meyer they will then be referred to this complaints policy.

Roles and responsibilities

1. The complainant

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- Follow these procedures
- Cooperate with the nurseries throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved with respect
- Not publish details about the complaint on social media

2. The investigator

An individual will be appointed to investigate the complaint and establish the facts. They will:

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report which includes the facts and potential solutions
- Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing

Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

Time scales

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

We will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

If at any point we cannot meet the time scales we have set out in this policy, we will:

i. Set new time limits with the complainant
ii. Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay

Stages of complaint

Stage 1: informal

The nurseries will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the manager as appropriate, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the administration team.

The school will acknowledge informal complaints within 5 school days and investigate and provide a response within 20 school days.

The informal stage will involve a meeting between the complainant and the manager.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

Stage 2: formal

Formal complaints can be raised:

a) By letter or email
b) Over the phone
c) In person
d) By a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the manager.

The manager will call a meeting to clarify concerns and seek a resolution. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting and should inform the nurseries of the identity of their companion in advance.

In certain circumstances, the nurseries may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the nurseries will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.

The manager will then conduct their own investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 20 working days.

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the manager or director within 5 working days.

How to escalate a complaint

Complaints can be escalated by:

a) By letter or email
b) Over the phone
c) In person
d) Through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

The manager/director will need the details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 20 term-time days.

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform Ofsted. The contact for Ofsted for complaints is available at the entrance to each nursery.

Complaints against the manager.

Stage 1: informal

Complaints made against the manager should be directed to the director in the first instance.

Stage 2: formal

The procedure will be as above. If the complaint is against the director, the director will not be involved in the complaints procedure. If the complaint is against the manager, the manager will not be involved in the complaints procedure. Where necessary, we will ask an external panel appointed by the proprietor to consist of three people who are independent of the nurseries to look at the complaint should the complainant feel that the SMT should not be involved in the investigation.

The nursery will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 10 school days.

Referring complaints on completion of the nurseries' procedure

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the nurseries' complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to Ofsted

Ofsted's powers here are limited: they cannot resolve disputes between you and the nurseries. Their role is to make sure that the childcare provider or agency is following all registration requirements and to take action if necessary.

To complain about a childcare provider or childminder agency, get in touch with Ofsted at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or 0300 123 4666.

If you complain, they will review the information you provide and decide what to do. They may carry out an immediate inspection, ask the nurseries to act or work with other agencies to look at any issues.

However, they will not contact you to let you know the outcome.

We will include this information in the outcome letter to complainants.

Persistent complaints

Unreasonably persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

a) Has made the same complaint before, and it has already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
b) Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
c) Knowingly provides false information
d) Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaint's procedure
e) Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaint's procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure, and the time frames it sets out
f) Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation goes on
g) Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
h) Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value

Steps we will take

We will take every reasonable step to address the complaints' concerns and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:

a) Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
b) Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
c) Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as Citizens Advice
d) Put any other strategy in place as necessary

Stopping responding

We may stop responding to the complainant when all these factors are met:

a) We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns
b) We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
c) The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our nurseries.

Duplicate complaints

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we had not previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

a. Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and the local process is complete and offer to direct them to Ofsted.
b. Direct them to Ofsted if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint
c. If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

Complaint campaigns

Where the school receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, the school may respond to these complaints by:

iii. Publishing a single response on the school website

iv. Sending a template response to all the complainants

If complainants are not satisfied with the school's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

Record keeping

Lloyd Williamson Nurseries will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential, held centrally, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint.

This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or through a subject access request under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during an inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law.

Learning lessons

The manager will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the director, where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the nurseries can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

Monitoring arrangements

The director will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly. The SMT will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in section 11.

The complaints records are logged and managed by the SMT. This policy will be reviewed

every 3 years or as needed e.g. if legislation changes.

Reviewed and Updated October 2027

Lucy Meyer **Ramona Cristea**
Director ***Manager***

Appendix:

Complaints Form

Complaints Recording Form

Personal Details .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Postcode .....

Telephone number .....

Name of child(ren) .....

Your relationship to the nurseries, e.g. parent, carer, neighbor, member of the public, student:

.....

Please give details of your complaint: Please be specific

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? Who did you speak to, when and what was the response?

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

Signature .....

Date .....

Official Use:

Date of acknowledgment .....

By whom .....

Complaint referred to .....

Date .....