



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

February 2026

Joanna
Gardner
Head of
Education

Complaints Procedure: The Ferry Centre

At The Ferry Centre, we value our relationship with parents, carers, and the wider community. We understand that concerns may arise, and we are committed to resolving them fairly, openly, and as quickly as possible.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Most concerns can be resolved quickly through informal discussion.

- **Who to contact:** In the first instance, please contact your child's Class Teacher or Key Worker.
- **Timeline:** We aim to acknowledge your concern within **2 working days** and provide a response or meet with you within **5 working days**.
- **Goal:** To reach a resolution through dialogue and mutual understanding.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint to the Head of Education

If the matter is not resolved informally, or if the complaint is of a serious nature, you should submit a formal written complaint.

- **Who to contact:** **Jo Gardner, Head of Education.**
- **Process:** Please provide a written account of your grievance, including any desired outcomes.
- **Timeline:** Jo Gardner will acknowledge receipt within **3 working days**. A full investigation will be conducted, and a written response will be issued within **10 working days**.
- **Note:** If the complaint is specifically about the Head of Education, the process moves directly to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Formal Complaint to the Proprietor

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, you may escalate the matter to the Chief Executive Officer.

- **Who to contact:** **Will Harvey, proprietor.**

- **Process:** Submit your complaint and the reasons for your continued dissatisfaction in writing.
- **Timeline:** Will Harvey will review the investigation and may meet with the parties involved. A final executive decision will be issued within **10 working days** of receipt.

Stage 4: Independent Panel Hearing

If the complaint remains unresolved, it will be referred to a Complaints Panel.

- **The Panel:** Consists of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one member will be **independent** of the management and running of The Ferry Centre.
- **The Hearing:** You will be invited to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by a friend or relative.
- **Timeline:** The hearing will typically take place within **15 working days** of the request.
- **Outcome:** The Panel's findings and recommendations will be sent in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.

Data Protection & Privacy Complaints

If your complaint specifically concerns how we collect, store, share, or protect personal data—or relates to a **Subject Access Request (SAR)** or a data security breach—it falls under data protection legislation rather than our general complaints framework.

In line with statutory rules, individuals must lodge a data protection complaint directly with us first before escalating it to the regulator. We handle these cases through a dedicated, accelerated process to prevent undue delays.

- **How to submit:** You may make a data protection complaint via any channel (such as email, letter, phone, or in person). You do not need to use formal legal language or cite data laws. To ensure it is routed swiftly to our data lead, we recommend emailing your concern directly with the subject line *"Data Protection Complaint"*.
- **Third Parties & Children:** If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we will require proof of authorisation before investigating. If a child makes a data complaint, we will assess their competence and communicate with them in clear, age-appropriate language.

- **Separation of Complaints:** If your data protection concern is part of a broader general complaint, we will separate the data portion and provide an outcome for it early if waiting for the rest of the general procedure would cause an unjustifiable delay.
- **Statutory Timelines:**
 - **Acknowledgment:** We will formally acknowledge your data protection complaint within **30 days** of receipt.
 - **Investigation & Updates:** We will begin our enquiries immediately. We are required to investigate without "undue delay," and we will provide you with regular progress updates if the investigation takes time due to scale or complexity.
 - **Outcome:** Once completed, we will issue a clear written outcome explaining the steps we have taken to resolve the issue.
- **Escalation to the ICO:** If you remain unhappy with our final decision or how your data complaint was handled, you have the right to escalate the matter directly to the **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**. You can contact them via their website at www.ico.org.uk or by calling 0303 123 1113.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

- A written record of all formal complaints is maintained, including whether they were resolved at the formal stage or proceeded to a panel hearing.
- All correspondence, statements, and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. Panel findings and recommendations are available for inspection on the school premises by the head teacher and proprietor.

Important Note: This procedure does not apply to matters with separate statutory appeal processes, such as appeals regarding Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or admissions.

Once officially open, any previous recorded complaints will be available on theferrycentre.co.uk