



Abbots Langley School

Inspiring life-long learners

Complaints Policy

Persons responsible	Head and Chair of Governors
Document date	November 2018
Review date	Determined by the Governing Body

This policy is based on the Hertfordshire model procedure for dealing with school based complaints - publication date September 2017 which will be reviewed in September 2019 (publication schedule number CS4288).

Throughout this policy the term parent applies to parents/legal guardians and carers of children on roll at Abbots Langley Primary School.

How we will deal with parents concerns – either comments or complaint

How to comment:

We care about what parents think. Each day Abbots Langley Primary School makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children. Parent's comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning. Parents may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of our school, though not actually make a complaint - you just want to get something 'off your chest'.

It is important to differentiate a concern from a complaint.

How to raise a concern:

A concern can be defined as a cause of worry, and can be handled without the need for formal procedures.

Your comments will be shared with staff on a need to know basis. If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel free to contact us using the contact details below marked for the attention of the relevant member of teaching staff or the Phase Leader (see Appendix 5), dependent on the age of your child:

Abbots Langley Primary School, Parsonage Close, Abbots Langley, WD50BQ

Tel: 01923 263174

admin@abbotslangleyprimary.com

We aim to make an initial response, if required, within two working days, and may need up to a working week where a more detailed response is necessary.

How to make a complaint:

In the first instance – Informal stage

We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation. Your complaint will be shared with staff on a need to know basis.

Informal stage step 1

If there is something you are not happy about, or you don't understand why we are doing something in a particular way, please come in and discuss it with the class teacher or Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) if it is about Special Needs. We know that it can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge something, but if you don't tell us what is worrying you we cannot explain what we are doing or try to put it right. We aim to make an initial response, if required, within two working days, and may need up to five working days where a more detailed response is necessary.

Informal stage step 2

If the member of staff you speak to in the first instance is unable to attempt to resolve the matter, you should make an appointment with the Phase Leader, using the email address admin@abbotslangleprimary.com We aim to make an initial response within two working days, and may need up to five working days where a more detailed response is necessary. These senior staff members should be able to address your concerns, but sometimes this is not possible.

Informal stage step 3

Where this is the case, parents are invited, after speaking to a Phase Leader, to raise their concern with a member of the Senior Leadership team (see Appendix 5). They will aim to make an initial response within two working days, and may need up to ten working days where a more detailed response is necessary.

Informal stage step 4

Where this is the case, parents are invited, after speaking to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, to raise their concern with the Headteacher. The Headteacher will aim to make an initial response within two working days, and may need up to ten working days where a more detailed response is necessary.

If after meeting the Phase Leader, member of the Senior Leadership team and the Headteacher your concern is still unsettled parents can enter the formal stage by raising a Formal stage 1 complaint.

How to make a complaint - Formal stage:

Our aims:

- The complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence on a need to know basis.
- The complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.

- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- You will be told what Abbots Langley Primary School are going to do in regards to the complaint.
- You will get a full and clear written reply to formal complaints within 28 school days (5½ weeks).

Formal stage 1

Following the informal stage steps 1-4 parents can request a meeting with the Headteacher who will investigate the complaint further and aim to inform parents of the outcome within 10 school days of receiving Appendix 1 completed by the parents. The Headteacher will respond using Appendix 3.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should write to the Chair of Governors. If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you might find it helpful to talk to our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or your child's named Special Needs Officer at the Local Authority. The SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS – formerly Parent Partnership) may also be able to help you.

Documents and discussions must remain strictly confidential between parent making the formal complaint and staff involved to allow the complaints policy to be implemented.

If your first contact is with individual Governors, they will advise you to take up your concerns with the appropriate member of staff or Phase Leader. A Governor should not be made aware of a potential complaint as they may be required to sit on a Panel in the event of a formal hearing (formal Stage 2) and should be impartial.

Formal stage 2

If you remain dissatisfied following Formal stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, you will be asked to complete Appendix 2 addressed to the Chair of Governors via the School Office. In Appendix 2 you should:

- Make it clear why you are complaining.
- Say who you have spoken to already.
- Explain what you want to happen as a result of your complaint.

The Chair of Governors will arrange for your complaint to be considered and investigated under the arrangements approved by the Governing Body. This should involve a Panel of Governors at a hearing where the complainant and the respondent are invited to attend. If the Chair of Governors or another Governor has been involved in discussions to help settle the matter at Stage 1, s/he should arrange for another Governor to take charge of the situation.

Neither the Chair of Governors nor the Governor in charge will sit on the Panel themselves and they will instead ensure that a Panel is convened in line with the timeframes and guidance set out in the school's complaints procedure. The Governor in charge of investigating the complaint may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns. The panel will not investigate and conclude matters without giving the Complainant and Respondent the opportunity to respond. Therefore a formal hearing with all in attendance is most preferable.

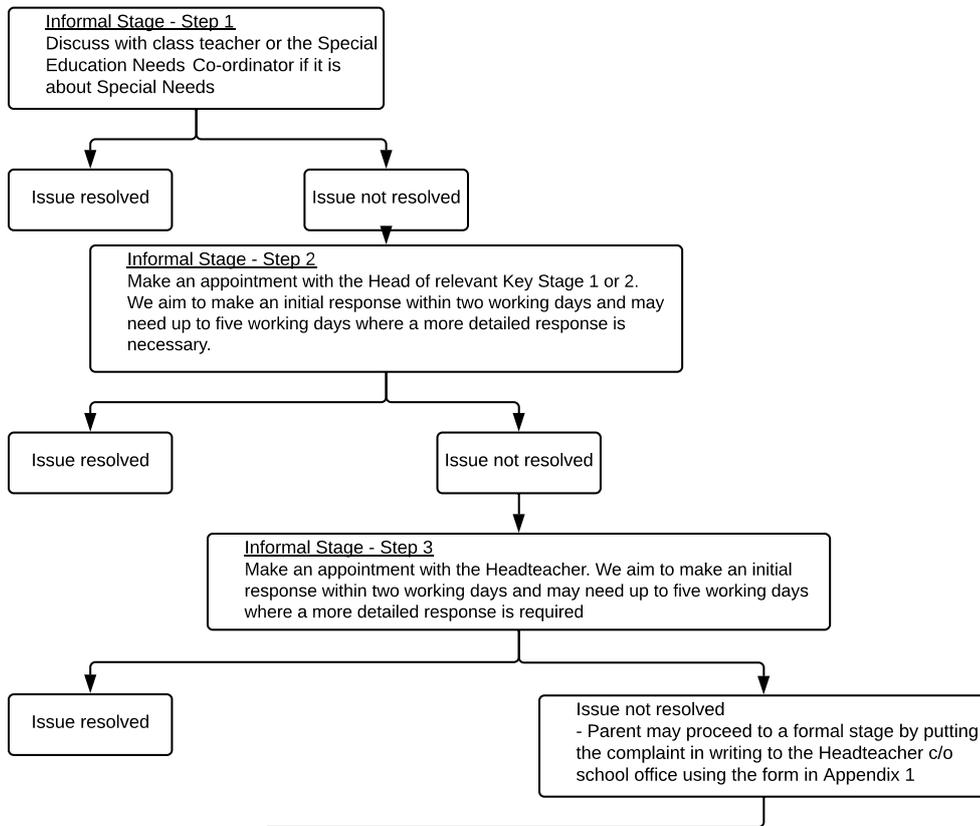
Parents should make sure that the Governors' Complaint Panel is provided with any written information or evidence you intend to use in a formal hearing. Parents may bring a friend, representative or interpreter to any meeting if they wish. The Chair of the Panel may invite any person who may help establish the facts of the complaint. The Chair will tell you who this person

is before the meeting. If any member of staff is required by the Governing Body to attend a meeting they will have the opportunity to be accompanied or represented as they wish. A member of staff named in a complaint may also choose to attend a meeting, even if not required to do so by the Governors. They may be represented. If this happens, we will inform you in advance.

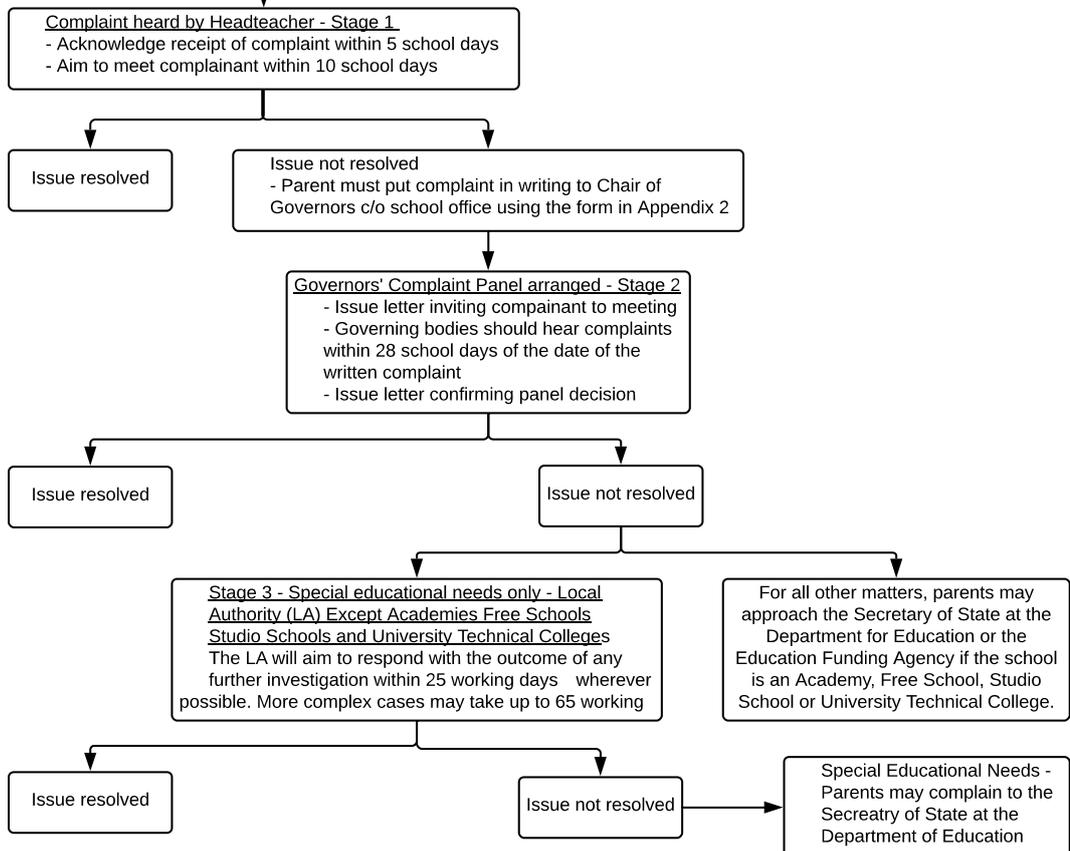
When the Panel has fully investigated your complaint, the Chair of the Panel or the Governor in charge of the investigation will write to you to tell you the findings based on Hertfordshire's model response Appendix 4. These findings will be reported to The Governing Body. The Chair of Governors will then write to you confirming the outcome of your complaint and any agreed actions to be taken. Our Governing Body will aim to deal with your Formal stage 2 complaint within 28 school days (5½ weeks).

General Principles of complaints diagram:

INFORMAL STAGE



FORMAL STAGE



Further recourse:

Most complaints are resolved by this process. Should your complaint not be resolved, your further options are as follows:

- **You can complain to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education:**

The Secretary of State Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT. Website: www.education.gov.uk Telephone: 0370 000 2288

In the case of complaints about Special Educational Needs provision, you may complain further to the Local Authority. This should be done by writing to the Children's Services Complaints Manager.

It should be noted however that if you wish to pursue this route, you must do so within 20 working days (4 weeks) of receiving the written outcome of the hearing into your complaint. After 20 working days (4 weeks), neither the school nor the Local Authority is under any obligation to investigate or progress your complaint any further.

Useful contacts:

Advisory Centre for Education
Education Advice & Training
72 Durnsford Road
London
N11 2EJ
Web: www.ace-ed.org.uk
Phone: 0300 0115 142

POhWER
Hertlands House
Primett Road
Stevenage
SG1 3EE
Web: www.pohwer.net
Phone: 0300 456 2370

Children's Legal Centre
Riverside Office Centre
Century House North
North Station Road
Colchester
Essex
CO1 1RE
Web: www.childrenslegalcentre.com
0345 345 4345

National Youth Advocacy Service
(NYAS)
Egerton House
Tower Road
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 1FN
Web: www.nyas.net Phone:
Phone: 0345 345 4345

Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice Support Service (SENDIASS)
Web: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/sendiaass
Email: SENDIASS@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Phone: 01992 555847

Abbots Langley Primary School Formal Complaint Stage 1 Form

Child's Name and Year Group		
Mother's Name/Parent 1		
Father's Name/Parent 2		
Address		
Email address		
Home telephone		
Mobile		
Date Appendix 1 completed by parent		
Date Appendix 1 received by Headteacher	<i>(school to complete)</i>	
Have you raised this issue with the Class Teacher (informal stage step 1)? If so, when did you do this?	YES (inc. date)	NO
Have you raised this issue with the Phase Leader (informal stage step 2)? If so, when did you do this?	YES (inc. date)	NO
Have you raised this issue with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (informal stage step 3)? If so, when did you do this?	YES (inc. date)	NO
Have you raised this issue with the Headteacher (informal stage step 4)? If so, when did you do this?	YES (inc. date)	NO

What are the grounds of your complaint? *(Please specify if you consider this a SEN or Child Protection issue.)*

What would you like Abbots Langley Primary School to do to put things right?

Please return this form to the Headteacher

Abbots Langley Primary School Formal Complaint Stage 2 Form

Child's Name and Year Group			
Mother's Name/Parent 1			
Father's Name/Parent 2			
Email address			
Home telephone			
Mobile			
Date Appendix 2 completed by parent			
Date Appendix 2 received by chair of Governors	<i>(Chair to complete)</i>		
Have you raised this Formal Complaint with the Headteacher (Formal stage 1)?	YES (inc. date)	NO	
If so, when did you receive the Headteacher's written response?			
What are the grounds of your complaint following the Headteacher's investigation in Formal stage 1?			
What would you like Abbots Langley Primary School to do to put things right?			

Please return this form to the Chair of Governors via the School Office

Appendix 3



Abbots Langley School

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STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Dear parent

Following our meeting on [date], I am writing to provide the outcome of my investigation of your complaint raised. We are committed to learning and improving every child's experience within our school and thank you for raising your concern, as we know this can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge.

1- Grounds of the complaint

I understand the complaint to be...

And note you would like the following outcome...

2- Investigation

I have conducted the following investigation:

- [detail materials reviewed, policies applicable]
- [detail persons interviewed and statements recorded]
- [detail further advice, policy interpretation etc...]
-

3- Outcome of my Investigation

I have reached the conclusions below for the following reasons and taking all of the below circumstances into consideration...

I propose the following resolution for the complaint you raised...

4- Next steps and referral rights

Given the resolution proposed above, I am proposing the following next steps [this will naturally vary depending on the outcome]:

- e.g. I will be communicating to the staff / full school

- e.g. I will be reviewing the following policy / procedure

- e.g. I have implemented the following steps

- e.g. I have informed the Governing Body

If you are not satisfied with this resolution of your complaint at this stage (Formal stage 1), you can escalate the complaint to the Chair of Governors (Formal stage 2) using Appendix 2 . The

chair will then arrange for your Formal stage 2 complaint to be investigated and considered by a panel of governors and aim to respond within 28 working schooldays using Appendix 4 of the complaints policy.

Feel free to contact me should you have any further questions, or wish to clarify any of the points raised in this letter.

Kind regards,

Headteacher

Appendix 4



Abbots Langley School

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STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Dear parent

FORMAL STAGE 2 COMPLAINT FINDINGS – date

Thank you for attending the Hearing on...

The Panel considered the complaint raised that...

At the Panel the complaint was clarified ...

The Panel considered the evidence very carefully ...

It is unfortunate that ...

We have noted the ...

We shall be making the following recommendations to the Headteacher:...

As a result of our investigation, there are also some recommendations that we shall be making to the Governing Body....

This decision is final and your complaint is now closed.

You may make a complaint to the Department of Education if you believe the Governing Body has acted outside its powers or is misusing them. The Secretary of State's address is Department of Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 5

Senior Leadership team:

Mrs Negrello

Mrs Salt

Mr Willcox

Miss Crawley

Miss Dockrell

Mrs Miles

Phase leaders:

Key Stage 1 - Mrs Alce and Mrs Harris

Lower Key Stage 2 - Mrs Butler

Upper Key Stage 2 - Miss McKay