



Abbots Langley School

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# Abbots Langley School Complaints Policy

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on a bi-annual basis.

This policy was reviewed and updated in January 2016

Next review date: **January 2018**

## Introduction

This policy has been approved by our governing body. It is written in conjunction with guidance from Hertfordshire Children Schools and Families (CSF).

The Governing Body is required to deal with all complaints relating to the school (stages 1-3 in the guidelines outlined below).

The LEA is required only (stage 4) to deal with complaints that are dealt with in accordance with statutory provision i.e

- School curriculum, collective worship, religious education and the provision of information by law
- Appeals about admission
- Appeals about exclusion
- Appeals about assessment and statements of special educational needs

## Policy

### Advice and guidance for parents / carers

CSF will provide advice and guidance to parents, Head teacher and Governors at any stage of the complaints process. Details of contact numbers are available from the school office.

### A Listening School

At Abbots Langley Primary School we aim to deal with all worries and complaints in a positive and supportive manner. We describe ourselves as a listening school and welcome questions, comments and suggestions for improvement.



In most cases the teacher should be the first point of contact and we aim to deal with all concerns quickly and effectively. If the parent/carer is not happy with the way the concern has been dealt with, the stages below offer clear guidance as to the action to be taken.

## **Stage 1: Initial Contact with the school**

Many concerns will be dealt with informally when you first make them known to the school. In most cases we would expect the class teacher to be the first point of contact, either by telephone or email via the office or in person at the classroom door.

If the parent/carer wishes to meet with the class teacher to discuss concerns at a greater depth, we respectfully ask them to make an appointment to discuss the situation. This ensures that:

- We allocate sufficient time to listen carefully to your complaint
- Lessons can start on time and are uninterrupted

If for any reason the teacher is unable to meet with the parent, he / she will either

- arrange an alternative appointment
- ask the Head teacher or her representative to informally meet with the parent / carer

If possible we prefer all concerns / complaints to be dealt with as quickly as possible and to everyone's satisfaction. It is preferable for concerns to be handled without the need for formal procedures. We pride ourselves on honest and genuine relationships within our school; such values extend to all relationships with children, parents and members of our wider school community.

However, we do appreciate that there may be times when more formal procedures are required and we will treat all complaints with respect and with good manners. In most cases we hope that the class teacher will be the first contact and we will endeavour to resolve issues at that point.

All complaints will be investigated with respect and integrity.

Occasionally these discussions do not always resolve your concern, and if you are still dissatisfied your concern will become a formal complaint.



## **Stage 2: Formal Consideration of your complaint**

You will be asked to confirm the complaint in writing to the Head teacher (or Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Head teacher) and it will be acknowledged in writing.

As part of the school's consideration of your complaint, you may be invited to a meeting to discuss the complaint and to discuss any further details. If you wish, you can ask someone to accompany you, to help you explain the reasons for your complaint.

The Head teacher or Chair of Governors will carry out a full investigation of all matters relating to your complaint. Where necessary they will talk to witnesses and take statements from others involved.

If the complaint centres on a pupil, the school will talk to the pupil concerned and, where appropriate, others present at the time of the incident in question. The school will normally talk to a pupil with a parent or carer present.

If the complaint is against a member of staff, it will be dealt with under the school's internal confidential procedures.

The Head teacher or Chair of Governors will keep written / typed, signed and dated records of all meetings and telephone conversations and other related documents.

Once the school has established all the relevant facts, they will send you a written response to your complaint. This will give a full explanation of the Head teacher's / Chair of Governor's decision and the reason for it. If follow-up action is needed, the school will indicate what we are proposing to do.

## **Stage 3: Consideration by the Governing Body**

If your concern has already been through Stage 1 and 2 and you are not happy with the outcome, the next step is to make a formal complaint to the Governing Body. You should contact the school's Chair of Governors by letter, enclosing a copy of the written complaint originally submitted, indicating which matters remain unresolved.

No new complaint may be included.



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Letters should be sent to:

## **Chair of Governors**

Abbots Langley School  
Parsonage Close  
Abbots Langley  
Herts  
WD5 0BQ

The Chair of Governors has discretion to agree to a complaint review panel if she/he feels it would be helpful in resolving the complaint.

The aim of the complaints review panel is to resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the parent(s) / carer(s). However, it may sometimes only be possible to establish facts and to make recommendations, which will reassure you that the complaint has been taken seriously.

The format of such a meeting would be for you to attend, to present your case and allow the governing body to take evidence. A separate meeting will then take place to allow the school staff to do the same.

Should the Governing Body agree to hold a complaints review meeting you will be informed of the date, time and place of the meeting by letter. The letter will also explain what will happen at the meeting and inform you that you are entitled to be accompanied at the meeting. With agreement of the Chair of the Panel, the Head teacher may invite members of the staff directly involved in matters raised by you to attend the meeting.

As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the meeting by any of the participants.

The clerk will send you and the Head teacher a written statement outlining the decision of the panel within two weeks.

## **Stage 4: Complaints to the Local Authority**

The Governing Body's decision will usually be final; however, if you wish to pursue the matter further, you can ask CSF whether your complaint is one that can be heard by them. However, in the majority of cases, unless your complaint relates to issues for which there are separate arrangements laid down by law (as previously detailed) there is no right of formal complaint to the Local Education Authority.



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If the LEA receives an anonymous complaint, the details will be passed to the school, but it will be at the school's discretion if this is investigated.  
N.B. this will not apply in relation to issues connected with Child Protection.

## **Stage 5: Complaints to the Secretary of State**

If you wish to pursue the complaint, you have recourse to the Secretary of State or, if the complaint is against action taken, or not taken by the LEA, it is possible for that complaint to be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.

We would advise that, unless the school or LEA has acted unreasonably or not to have followed our own procedures, there is little further action that can be taken. This is because Governing Bodies are empowered to deal with many issues without reference to either the LEA or Secretary of State.