

Commonswood Primary & Nursery School Complaints Procedure

Approved by Governors: Autumn 2023

Next Review: Annual

How we will deal with your concerns

Commonswood Primary & Nursery School

www.commonswood.herts.sch.uk

Email: admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk

Tel: 01707 880420

HOW TO COMMENT OR COMPLAIN

We care about what you think

Each day this school makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children. Your comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning.

You may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of this school, though not actually make a complaint - you just want to get something 'off your chest'.

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 details listed above.

Our aims

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- If your complaint is urgent we will deal with it more quickly.
- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right.
- You will get a full and clear written reply to formal complaints within **28 school days (5½ weeks)**.



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How to make a complaint

In the first instance – informal stage

If you have a concern about anything we do, or if you wish to make a complaint, you can do this in writing (by letter or email), to enable us to fully understand your complaint. Please address this to the Headteacher who will arrange for you to meet with the member of staff in question. We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation. 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 another appropriate member of staff, such as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) if it is about Special Needs.

The School is not able to consider a complaint about a child not on roll.

We know that it can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge decisions, but if you don't tell us what is worrying you we cannot explain what we are doing or try to put it right. 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 Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team within 10 school days. You should be able to sort out your worries but sometimes this is not possible. In this case there is a next step.

First - formal stage

If you feel that your concern has not been addressed, you should contact the Chair of Governors via the school administration department. A meeting will then be arranged with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors with the aim of addressing your concern.

Request a meeting with the Headteacher who will investigate your complaint and aim to inform you of the outcome **within 10 school days (2 weeks)**.

If your first contact is with individual Governors, they will advise you to take up your concerns with the appropriate member of staff or Headteacher. 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 (Stage Two) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should **write to the Chair of Governors**. If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or 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.

It is not possible to progress a complaint to Stage 2 until a meeting with the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors and Headteacher in the case of a complaint about the Headteacher) has taken place. Experience shows that most concerns can be resolved through face to face discussion. In exceptional cases, where both parties agree that a formal Stage 1 meeting is unlikely to resolve the concern, it will be possible to progress to Stage 2 without a Stage 1 meeting if both parties agree this in writing.

Letters to the Chair of Governors should be handed in/sent into the school office marked 'Private & Confidential'.

Second - formal stage

If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, a meeting with the Chair of Governors or other appropriate Governor will be arranged. If, after this meeting, the issue remains unresolved, you will be asked to complete Appendix A which should be sent/ addressed to the Chair of Governors. Here 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 is likely to involve a Panel of Governors. If the Chair of Governors or another Governor has been involved in discussions to help settle the disagreement at Stage 1, s/he should arrange for another Governor to take charge of the investigation. The Governor in charge of investigating the complaint may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns.

You should make sure that the Governors' Complaint Panel is provided with any written information or evidence you intend to use in a formal hearing. You may bring a friend, representative or interpreter to any meeting if you wish. The Chair of the Panel may invite any person who may help establish the facts of the complaint. The Chair should 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. 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 complaint **within 28 school days (5½ weeks)**.

Further recourse

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

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.

Contact details for the Local Authority SEND complaints Department
Complaints Team
Customer Service Team
County Hall
Hertford
SG13 8DF

- 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

National Youth Advocacy Service

(NYAS)
Egerton House
Tower Road
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 1FN

Web: www.nyas.net

Phone: **0345 345 4345**

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SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice Support Service – formerly Parent Partnership)

Registry Office Block

CHR102

County Hall

Hertford

SG13 8DF

Web: www.hertsdirect.org/parentpartnership

Email: parent.partnership@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Phone: **01992 555847**

Family Lives

(Formerly Parentline Plus)

15-17 The Broadway

Hatfield

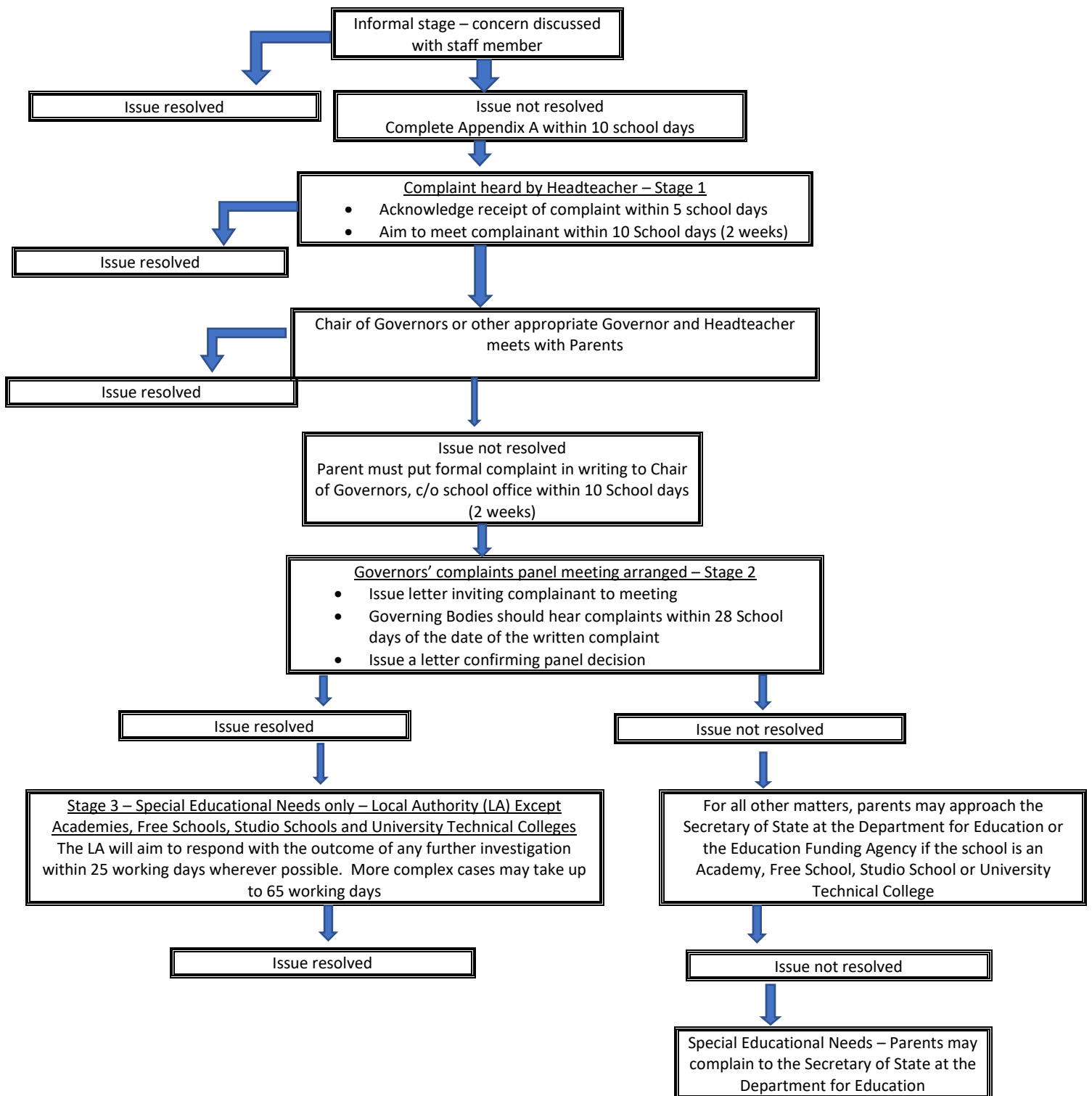
Hertfordshire

AL9 5HZ

Web: www.familylives.org.uk

Phone: **0808 800 2222**

Dealing with Complaints



School days are term time only, whilst working days are weekdays throughout the year.

Formal Complaint Form

Name		
Address		
Postcode		
Email address		
Telephone No.	Day	
	Evening	
	Mobile	
What is it you want to complain about:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it clear why you are complaining: 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say who you have spoken to already and if any actions were taken: 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain what you want to happen as a result of your complaint? 		
Have you raised your issue with the member of staff (informal stage)? If so, when did you do this?	YES (inc. date)	NO
Have you complained to the Headteacher (Stage1)?	YES	NO
When did you do this?	Date:	
What happened when you complained to the Headteacher?		

Signed & Dated:	
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Please return this form to the Chair of the Governing Body marked Private & Confidential.