

# CASSIOBURY INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL

## Complaints Policy

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### HOW TO COMMENT OR COMPLAIN

This document outlines what happens when a parent or carer makes a complaint; it covers both the informal and formal procedures. We care about what you think. Each day this school makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children and families in our school community. Your comments about the decisions we make can help to shape our policy and practice. We welcome your feedback, both the type that can help us improve or that celebrates what we are doing well.

As we say in every new parent meeting, effective communication between home and school is vital and we pride ourselves on building relationships with our families and tackling small issues before they grow. You are welcome to come and talk to us about a particular aspect of school life, policy or procedure without actually making a complaint - you might just want to share your experience with us, bring something to our attention or get some clarity on a situation. If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, we would welcome the opportunity to talk to you in person about this. You can make an appointment with us on the phone (01923 222782) in person at the office or via email: [admin@cassioburyinfants.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@cassioburyinfants.herts.sch.uk)

### Our aims

- Your feedback / complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your feedback / complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- We will apologise if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right by the Headteacher within 10 days
- You will get a full and clear written reply to formal complaints within **28 school days (5½ weeks)**.

## 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 by telephone, in person or in writing (by letter or email). We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation. In the first instance, 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 Inclusion Manager (INCo) 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. 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. We should be able to alleviate your worries but sometimes this is not possible. In this case there is a next step.

### First - formal stage

Request a meeting with the Headteacher who will clarify with you whether you are making a complaint or sharing a concern.

If making a complaint they will then ask you to share:

- The details of your complaint
- What steps, if any, have you already taken to resolve your complaint
- What you feel would be a successful outcome

There is a written form that you would be asked to complete in advance of your meeting with the Head teacher (Appendix 1).

The Headteacher will meet with you initially and then 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 an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you might find it helpful to talk to our Inclusion Manager (INCo) 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.

### Second - formal stage

If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, you will be asked to complete a form or write a letter addressed to the Chair of Governors.

In the letter 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 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](http://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](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)  
Phone: **0300 0115 142**

### **POhWER**

Hertlands House  
Primett Road  
Stevenage  
SG1 3EE  
Web: [www.pohwer.net](http://www.pohwer.net)  
Phone: **0300 456 2370**

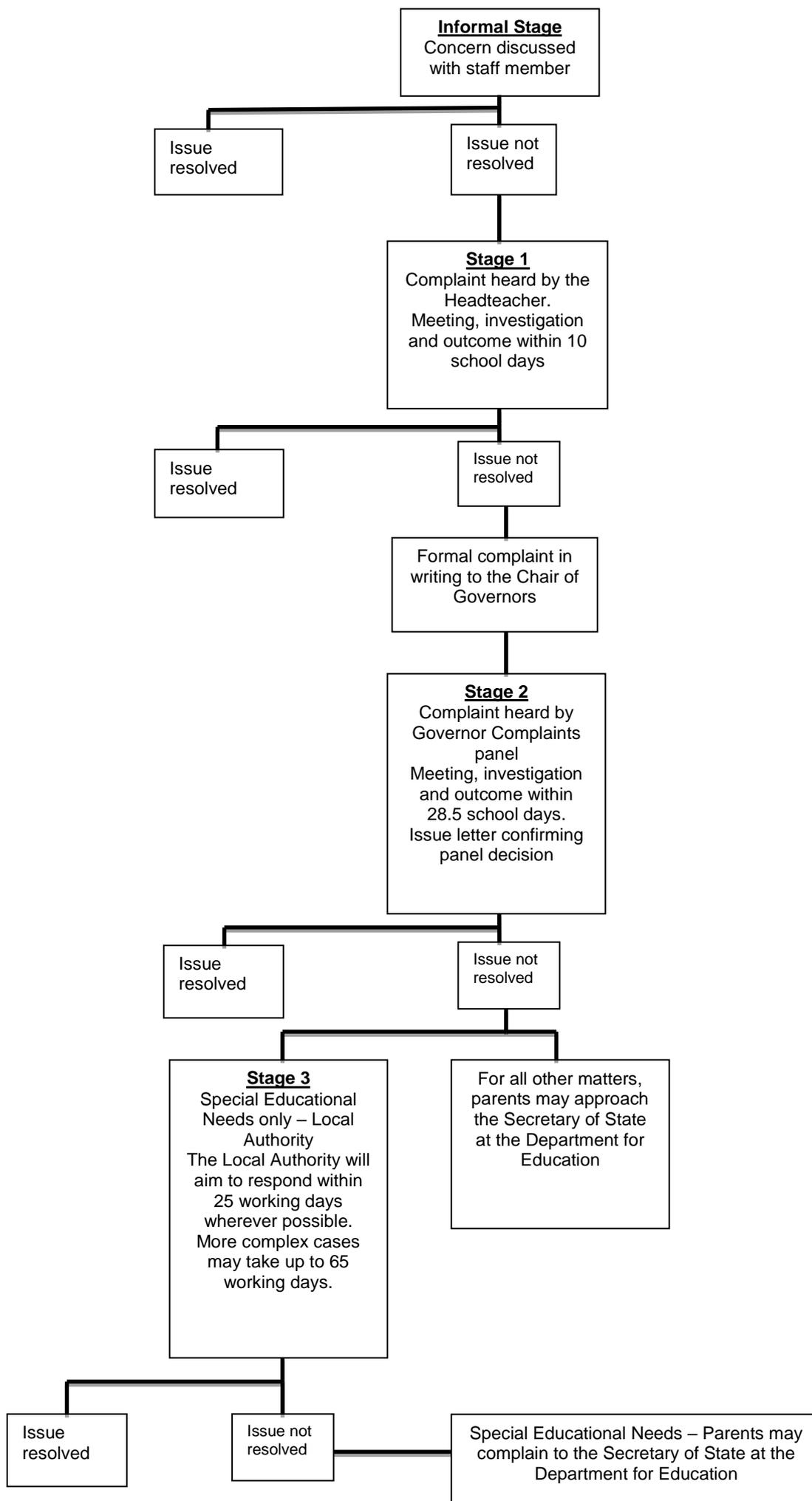
### **Children's Legal Centre**

Riverside Office Centre  
Century House North  
North Station Road  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO1 1RE  
Web: [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)  
Phone: **0345 345 4345**

**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](http://www.hertsdirect.org/parentpartnership)  
Email: [parent.partnership@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:parent.partnership@hertfordshire.gov.uk)  
Phone: **01992 555847**

## Dealing with complaints



<b>CASSIOBURY INFANT &amp; NURSERY SCHOOL</b>
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## Formal Complaint Form

Date of Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Name</b>			
<b>Address</b>			
<b>Email address</b>			
<b>Telephone No.</b>	<b>Day</b>		
	<b>Evening</b>		
	<b>Mobile</b>		
<b>If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else please provide their details below:</b>			
<b>What is it you want to complain about?</b>			
<b>Have you raised your issue with the Class Teacher (informal stage)?</b>	<b>YES (inc. date)</b>	<b>NO</b>	
<b>What steps, if any, have you already taken to resolve your complaint?</b>			
<b>What do you feel would be a successful outcome?</b>			
<b>Received by:</b>		<b>Date received:</b>	