Complaints Procedure During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Please note: In line with current government guidance, the school is not expected to handle new or existing concerns while it is temporarily closed due to the coronavirus pandemic; however, the school maintains open communication channels for complainants to contact the school with a concern.

Statement of intent

We understand the necessity to adapt our complaints procedure during the school's temporary closure and to ensure members of our school community can continue to voice any concerns they may have.

This appendix outlines how the school manages concerns and complaints during the coronavirus pandemic, in line with the government's guidance and this policy. The information in this section is under constant review and kept updated to reflect any changes to national or local guidance.

It is important to note, however, that the DfE **does not** expect the school to address new or existing concerns or complaints during the period of temporary closure.

1. Key definitions

1.1. For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions are used:

- **Children of key workers:** children of parents who work in the following industries:
    - Health and social care, e.g. doctors and nurses
    - Education and childcare, e.g. teachers and DSLs
    - Local and national government, e.g. administrative occupations
    - Food and essential goods retail, e.g. supermarket workers and grocers
    - Public safety and national security, e.g. police and Ministry of Defence workers
    - Transport, e.g. freight transport workers and train drivers
    - Utilities, communication and financial services, e.g. bankers, oil workers, and telecommunications (999 and 111 critical services)
- **Vulnerable children:** children who have a social worker and children with EHC plans. Those who have a social worker include children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the LA. A child may also be deemed as vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need, are a young carer, or otherwise meet the definition in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

- **Social distancing:** measures put in place in line with government advice to reduce social interaction between people. This aims to reduce the transmission of coronavirus by preventing gatherings occurring in public spaces, such as schools, where possible.

2. Making a complaint

2.1. Concerns are not restricted to the parents of pupils. The school considers all concerns.

2.2. Complainants may express concerns to the school via:

- Email
- The school website
- Telephone
- Letter

2.3. Raising a concern in person is avoided while social distancing measures are in place, where possible.

2.4. The normal complaints procedure resumes once the school reopens; until this point, formal complaints cannot be dealt with by the school. Complaints should be raised to the LA or the DfE.

2.5. Any updates that influence this policy are communicated to all parties involved via email or telephone in a timely manner.

2.6. Where necessary, a concern can progress to a complaint; however, these are in exceptional circumstances.

2.7. Any concern made against a member of staff will be initially dealt with by the headteacher, as soon as it is deemed possible, and then by a committee of the governing board when the school reopens.

2.8. Any concern made against the headteacher shall be initially dealt with by a suitably skilled member of the governing board, as soon as is deemed possible, and then by a committee of the governing board when the school reopens.

2.9. Complainants are encouraged to call the DfE for more information regarding complaints at this time.

3. Concerns with regards to school closures

3.1. Concerns raised about the school's closure, including school places for the children of keyworkers and vulnerable pupils during closure, and remote learning resources, are handled as soon as it is deemed possible; however, the school is not expected to address new concerns during the period of closures.

3.2. The school addresses concerns about the school's closure, including school places and remote learning resources, in line with governmental advice, the relevant school policies, and local arrangements.

3.3. If parents have concerns over the school's conduct, they inform the headteacher or suitable member of the governing board.

3.4. If parents have any complaints that relate to the school's temporary closure, they direct their complaints to the LA or the DfE.

3.5. If a complaint relates to any safeguarding concerns, the complainant contacts the LA or, where appropriate, the police.

4. Recording a concern

4.1. A written record is kept of any concern made, where deemed necessary, and includes:

- The main issues raised and any recommendations.
- Whether the concern was resolved and how this was achieved.
- Actions taken by the school as a result of the concern raised.

4.2. The school keeps the governing board up-to-date with any concerns raised and actions that are taken to resolve them, where necessary.

4.3. Any record of concerns made are held in line with the Records Management Policy.

5. Monitoring and review

5.1. The deputy headteacher is responsible for continually monitoring government updates and updating this appendix in line with any changes and guidance on both national and local levels.

5.2. Any changes to this appendix are communicated to all staff, parents and relevant stakeholders.

5.3. This appendix is considered redundant once the school reopens – the school resumes its regular complaints procedures outlined in this policy.