



An Academy

BOUGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL: AN ACADEMY



An Academy

Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedures

2025-2027

PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:	MRS MARY JAMES
APPROVED: WAITING FOR APPROVAL:	FGB MTG 18TH JUNE 2025
BY:	FULL GOVERNING BODY
TO BE REVIEWED:	JUNE 2027

At *Boughton Primary* the named personnel with designated responsibility for safeguarding are:

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Safeguarding Governor
<i>Mary James</i>	<i>Jodie Hartwell</i>	<i>Karen Wilson</i>

The named personnel with Designated Responsibility regarding allegations against staff are:

Designated Senior Manager (normally the Head Teacher)	Deputy Designated Senior Manager	Chair of Governors (in the event of an allegation against the Head Teacher)
<i>Mary James</i>	<i>Jodie Hartwell</i>	<i>Karen Wilson</i>

POLICY CONJUNCTION

This policy forms part of our Safeguarding suite of policies. It will be reviewed at the same time as our other Safeguarding policies and should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and the school's Complaints Policy.

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1. Legislative Compliance

This policy is based on government legislation set out in Whistleblowing for Employees. All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to quickly in accordance with national and local guidance and procedures.

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

2. Introduction

This policy embodies the philosophy and ethos of Boughton Primary School, our policies and the principles of *Every Child Matters* (2003); the legislation set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2024) and in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2023). In addition, as a publicly funded institution, the policy has due regard to *The Academies Financial Handbook* (2024), our *Funding Agreement* and our *Memorandum and Articles of Association* (available on the school website).

The reporting of workplace concerns is commonly known as 'whistleblowing' or 'making a disclosure in the public interest.'

The Governing Body of Boughton Primary School takes seriously its responsibilities for good governance, the appropriate and efficient use of public money and resources and is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability. Where any worker has a concern that might fall within the scope of this document they are encouraged to report the matter to a senior leader of the school or the Board of Governors, as appropriate.

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

This policy applies to all workers in Boughton Primary School. To be a '**worker**' an individual must work for Boughton Primary School either under a contract of employment, under agreement with a recruitment agency or through a Service Level Agreement either as an individual or part of an organisation.

This policy is intended to encourage and enable workers to raise serious concerns within the school, by setting out the process to make a disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The school accepts that some staff may prefer to do this in a confidential way to avoid any public disclosure of their identity. This policy makes it clear that workers can raise concerns of illegal or improper conduct without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or contract for services and it may be subject to change, withdrawal or replacement at any time.

3. Aims and Scope

Workers are encouraged to report any concerns they may have about any aspect of the school, the conduct of its staff, the school's governors, or any other member of staff acting on behalf of the school.

In the first instance, the concerns should be reported to the Head Teacher of the school. If the concerns are in relation to the Head, these should be reported to the Chair of Governors. Any concerns in relation to members of the school's Board of Governors, should be made to Northamptonshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters directly with their employer (i.e. the Head or Chair of Governors). Referrals can be made at:

www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Volunteers who have concerns about our school should complain via the school's complaints procedure, in the first instance.

This policy is not intended to deal with

- Complaints relating to an employee's own personal circumstances; matters relating to their own job description or the way they have been treated at work, or about personal differences or conflicts. Such cases should be referred to the school's Grievance Procedures.
- Complaints about any third-party organisation or about another member of the public.

This policy aims to:

- Encourage employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns of illegal or improper conduct, and to question and act upon concerns about practice.
- Provide employees with a mechanism to raise those concerns and to be told of any action taken to address concerns.
- Ensure that employees receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue these if they feel that the internal processes have not been successful.
- Reassure employees that they will be protected from possible reprisal or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have made any disclosure in good faith.

Employees should report anything that:

- makes them feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, their experience or the standards they believe the school subscribes to;
- is against the school's policies and procedures;
- falls below established standards of practice; or
- amounts to improper conduct.

If they disclose information which suggests that any member of staff has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child; or behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children, the DfE statutory guidance (below) will be followed:

The statutory guidance within the DfE publication Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and, where relevant, the specific guidance given by the Secretary of State under sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002 (namely Safeguarding Children, Safer Recruitment in Education and Dealing with Allegations), will be followed because of the specific obligations upon persons reporting concerns regarding the wellbeing of children and young people.

The local arrangements for reporting such concerns can be found within our school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and on the website of the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP).

There is an expectation that concerns that fit one or more of the above criteria are reported within 24 hours. The NSCP website, gives guidance and identifies who is the Senior Manager from each agency who can advise on each step of the process. These procedures are commonly referred to as the Designated Officer (formally known as the LADO) procedures.

The law provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. These are called "qualifying disclosures". This policy is not designed to replace or be used as an alternative to the school's complaints and grievance procedure.

A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by a worker who has a reasonable belief that one of the following is being, has been or is likely to be committed:

- a criminal offence;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an act creating risk to health and safety;
- an act causing damage to the environment;
- unauthorized use of public funds;
- an act of fraud or corruption;
- sexual or physical abuse of pupils;
- a breach of any other legal obligation; or
- concealment of any of the above.

Protected Disclosures

The school is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of workers. Any disclosure of information as detailed above will only be a protected disclosure if it is made in the reasonable belief of the worker that the disclosure is **in the public interest**.

No worker who uses this procedure in the reasonable belief that the disclosure is in the public interest will be penalised for doing so. A worker has the right not to be subjected to a detriment by any act or deliberate omission by another worker employed by the school because he or she has made a protected disclosure.

The school recognises that a worker may wish to seek advice from, and be accompanied by, his/her trade union representative when disclosing a concern under this code. It acknowledges and endorses the role that a trade union representative providing advice and/or making a disclosure of information on behalf of one of their members in accordance with this code will not suffer detriment in their employment with the school.

The school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect workers when they raise a concern that they believe is in the public interest to disclose.

In the absence of any reasonable belief, any worker that is found to have made an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Confidentiality and Anonymous allegations

A concern reported under this policy will be treated confidentially. Unless the worker agrees, their identity will not be disclosed by the school in dealing with their concern within this policy.

However, this policy encourages workers to put their name to allegations whenever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the school.

In exercising this discretion the factors to be considered will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the concern;
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

In the event of a concern disclosing alleged criminal activity, the worker may be asked to help the police or other appropriate enforcement agency. In the event of disciplinary action taken by the school the worker may be asked to give evidence under the school's disciplinary procedure.

Untrue Allegations

If a worker reasonably believes that the claim was made in the public interest, but the claim is not confirmed following investigation, no action will be taken against the worker. However, maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.

4. How to Raise a Concern

As a first step, workers should raise concerns with their line manager or the Head Teacher. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if the worker believes that a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or the Head Teacher are involved, they should approach the Board of Governors. If the complaint is in relation to the Governing Board, then the Designated Officer (formally known as the LADO) should be contacted. **The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier it is to act.**

Workers may also decide that they wish to raise their concerns to prescribed persons or bodies identified by the Government within the Education Sector. All contact information for these prescribed persons or bodies is available at **Appendix A** are taken from the document “Whistleblowing List of Prescribed People and Bodies” (Jan 25).

As the statutory protections for whistle-blowers only apply in certain prescribed circumstances, workers are strongly encouraged to seek advice before making an external disclosure. If an external disclosure is made to an external body or agency, there may be a requirement for the worker to demonstrate why they thought the internal school procedure was not appropriate.

As an employee of the school, disclosing concerns externally, even in good faith, without first attempting to report internally, may result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

Workers are reminded that they must not disclose personal, sensitive, confidential or otherwise protected information to any person who is not authorised to receive it. As an employee of the school, unauthorised disclosure of such information may result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

If as a consequence of a worker’s complaint, information is published, which turns out not to be true and which has the potential to damage another person’s interests or reputation, there is a risk that they could be sued for defamation. Where it is clearly in the public interest for information to be brought out into the open immediately (even though it is untested and may ultimately turn out to be untrue or incorrect) a legal defence called “qualified privilege” is available. Concerns reported in good faith under this policy within the school will normally be covered by this defence. However, deliberate false statements will not.

If a worker is not a member of a trade union and/or they wish to obtain confidential advice about making a disclosure from an independent source, there is a charity called Protect, which offers free and impartial advice. <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

In the case of a concern being raised through SLT, depending on the nature of the concern, the complainant will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for their concern. Concerns may be raised verbally or, preferably, in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report should use the format in **Appendix B**.

Workers may wish to consider discussing their concern with a colleague or trade union representative before making a disclosure and may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) who have had the same experience or concerns. However, they should each make a separate and individual disclosure and should then **not** discuss the matter further between themselves.

Workers have the right to invite a trade union representative, or a work colleague, to be present during any meetings or interviews about the concerns that they have raised.

5. How the school will respond

Where concerns raised under this policy are referred to the Head Teacher/Board of Governors, they will seek appropriate HR / legal advice as required. The reported matter may:

- be investigated by management, Internal Audit, or through the disciplinary process.
- be referred to the police.
- be referred to an external auditor
- form the subject of an independent inquiry
- be investigated by an independent investigating officer, appointed on behalf of the school.

Where concerns have been raised with any other party, appropriate action will be taken, in order that the concerns are dealt with in the most efficient manner. This may result in the decision to progress the concern(s) through any of the actions identified within this policy or through another course of action, deemed appropriate. To protect individuals and those accused of illegal or improper conduct, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation of any kind is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

Concerns or allegations, which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection or discrimination issues), will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by Governing Board action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

It may be that the person that is dealing with the concern, may wish to meet with the person that has made the disclosure, to clarify certain details. Where any meeting is arranged as part of this procedure, the employee's trade union representative or work colleague may attend the meeting.

Within **10 working days of the date of the disclosure**, (*excluding periods of school closure*) the party dealing with the concern(s), will write to the complainant and where possible will provide the information below where this is available:

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received.
- Indicating how the matter is to be dealt with.
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response, telling the complainant whether any initial enquiries have been made.
- Telling the complainant whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

The amount of contact between the persons considering the issues and the complainant will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the school may seek further information from the complainant.

Under the Schools' Financial Regulations, in some circumstances, the details of the disclosure may need to be reported to Internal Audit, or to the school's Responsible Officer.

Where a concern is disclosed about wrongdoing or harm to children, young people and/or vulnerable persons, the school will refer the matter for investigation by a person with sufficient and appropriate independence, experience and expertise in such matters to be able to adequately investigate the concern raised. Where appropriate it may be necessary to report the matter to the Designated Officer (formally known as the LADO). The school will take steps to minimise any difficulties that complainants may experience because of raising a concern. For instance, if they are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings the school will arrange for advice on the process to be given.

The school accepts that the complainant expects to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. The relevant party, subject to any legal constraints and Data protection, will inform them of the outcome of any investigation that may take place.

Complainants will not be given any information regarding possible sanctions against any employee that they have complained about.

6. How the matter can be taken further

This policy is intended to provide workers with a way within the school to raise concerns. The school hopes staff will be satisfied with any action taken. If they are not, and feel they wish to take the matter outside the school, the following are possible contact points:

- The school's external auditor
- The Audit Commission (confidential reporting for suspected fraud)
- Your trade union
- Your local Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- A relevant voluntary organisation
- Prescribed persons or bodies, identified at Appendix A
- The police

Appendix A

Below is a list of the prescribed persons and bodies to whom you can make a disclosure, taken from the document "Whistleblowing List of Prescribed People and Bodies" (Jan 2025).

There is also a brief description about the matters you can report to each prescribed person.

Matters relating to the welfare of children:

Children's Commissioner for England

Contact them about matters relating to the rights, welfare and interests of children in England.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7783 8330 Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills ('the Chief Inspector')

Contact them about matters relating to regulation and inspection of children's social care.

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 3155
Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

Contact them about matters relating to child welfare and protection.

NSPCC
Weston House
42 Curtain Road

London
EC2A 3NH

Tel: 0800 028 0285

This phoneline is staffed 365 days a year:

- Mon-Fri (incl. bank holidays) 8am to 8pm
- Weekends 9am to 6pm

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/

Secretary of State for Education

Contact them about matters relating to the following educational institutions in England:

- maintained schools
- maintained nursery schools
- independent schools (including academies and free schools)
- non-maintained special schools
- pupil referral units
- alternative provision academies
- 16 to 19 academies (and free schools)
- an institution within the further education sector
- special post-16 institutions

Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Tel: 0370 000 2288

Website: www.gov.uk/contact-dfe

Matters relating to malpractice in statutory tasks and tests

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)

Contact them about matters in relation to which the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation exercise functions under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Whistleblowing and malpractice
Complaints investigation manager
Ofqual
Earlsdon Park
53-55 Butts Road

Coventry
CV1 3BH

Tel: 0300 303 3344

Email: whistleblowing@ofqual.gov.uk

Online form: complaints.ofqual.gov.uk/new-concern

Matters relating to health and safety, and food hygiene

The Health and Safety Executive

Contact them about:

- their functions under the Network and Information Systems Regulations 2018
- the industries and work activities for which the Health and Safety Executive is the enforcing authority under the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1998
- the health and safety of individuals at work, or the health and safety of the public arising out of or in connection with the activities of persons at work

Tel: 0300 003 1647

Online form: www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm

The Food Standards Agency (FSA)

Contact them about matters which may present a risk to health of any member of the public in connection with the production, supply or consumption of food, or otherwise concern the protection of consumer interests in relation to food in England, Wales, or Northern Ireland.

Food Standards Agency
Floor 6
Clive House
70 Petty France
London
SW1H 9EX

Tel: 0330 332 7149

Email: foodcrime@food.gov.uk

Website: www.food.gov.uk

Matters relating to data protection

The Information Commissioner

Contact them about compliance with the requirement of legislation relating to data protection and to freedom of information.

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113
Email: icocasework@ico.org.uk
Website: www.ico.org.uk

Matters relating to financial misconduct

The Comptroller and Auditor General

Contact them about the proper conduct of public business, value for money, fraud and corruption in relation to the provision of public services.

The Comptroller and Auditor General
National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1W 9SP

Tel: 020 7798 7999
Website: www.nao.org.uk/contact-us/whistleblowing-disclosures/

Appendix B Template Form for Whistleblowing

Making a public interest disclosure (whistleblowing)

This form is intended for use by any individual working for the school (including contractors, agency workers and volunteers) who wish to raise an issue about alleged wrongdoing.

This form should be used to report wrongdoing within the school (for example, financial irregularities or health and safety concerns), rather than to raise a personal grievance (for example, if you would like to make an allegation of bullying or harassment or are complaining that your contract of employment has been breached).

If you are unsure about whether your concerns are best dealt with under the school's whistleblowing policy or grievance policy, please read the above policies for guidance. If, having read the whistleblowing policy, you remain unsure about which procedure to use, please consult a member of the SLT or a governor.

Once you have submitted this form, the school's whistleblowing policy will be invoked. This may result in an investigation, which will not involve anyone (for example, your line manager) you may have implicated below.

In certain circumstances, you can request that your concerns be kept anonymous. Where possible, school will respect a request for anonymity, but cannot guarantee that it will be able to do so.

This form should be completed and delivered to your Headteacher in an envelope marked "confidential". In the event of the disclosure involving the Head Teacher, the form should be marked "For the attention of the Chair of Governors" and given to the office team to pass on.

Formal public interest disclosure (whistleblowing)

Please outline:

The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates).

The reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

Why you think this concern is in the public interest to disclose

Employee's name:

Employee's job title:

Date: