

St Mary's Catholic Primary School
'Learning together in Faith and Love'

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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Mission Statement

"Learning together in Faith and Love"

- St. Mary's Catholic Primary School exists to serve the Catholic families of the Parish of Our Lady of the Holy Souls, Kensal New Town and other local parishes.

The aims of our schools are:

- To promote Christian values where children live, learn and celebrate the teaching of Christ.
- To provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced and meaningful and where children can experience enjoyment and fulfilment.
- To promote the highest standards of teaching and learning within the framework of the National Curriculum
- To develop in each child a sense of achievement, value and self worth and to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- To help our children acquire the skills of independent learning and make sufficiently rapid progress.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where children feel valued, and where they respect, help and care for each other.
- To involve parents in all aspects of their child's education and promote good home/school partnership.
- To develop in our children awareness and respect for the different cultures and religions represented in society and their responsibility to the wider community.
- To foster the continuing development of staff, parents and governors in serving the community.

St. Mary's Values- these are the values that underpin all areas of our school community:

- **Kindness**
- **Respect**
- **Tolerance**
- **Honesty**
- **Responsibility (for ourselves and our world)**
- **Co-operation**

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PART One

Introduction

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the organisation. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the organisation. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

St Mary's Catholic Primary school is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of St Mary's Catholic Primary school's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

This policy document makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This whistleblowing policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns **within** St Mary's Catholic Primary school rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

The policy applies to all employees and those contractors working for St Mary's Catholic Primary school on St Mary's Catholic Primary school's premises, for example, agency staff. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with St Mary's Catholic Primary school in their own premises, for example, youth clubs and Life Coaches working from a private venue.

These procedures are in addition to St Mary's Catholic Primary school's complaints procedures and other statutory reporting procedures applying to directorates. You are responsible for making service users aware of the existence of these procedures.

PART TWO

Policy & Procedure

1. AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

1.1 This policy aims to:

- encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied

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- reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith.

1.2 There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment. The whistleblowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- damage to the environment
- the unauthorised use of public funds
- possible fraud and corruption
- sexual or physical abuse of clients, or
- other unethical conduct

1.3 Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees, volunteers, consultants, or Senior Leaders of St Mary's Catholic Primary school or others acting on behalf of St Mary's Catholic Primary school can be reported under the whistleblowing policy. This may be about something that:

- makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe St Mary's Catholic Primary school subscribes to; or
- is against the St Mary's Catholic School's policies and/or procedures; or
- falls below established standards of practice; or
- amounts to improper conduct.

1.4 This policy does **not** replace St Mary's Catholic Primary school's complaints procedure or any other related policy.

2. SAFEGUARDS

2.1 Bullying, Harassment or Victimisation

2.1.1 St Mary's Catholic Primary school is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees.

2.1.2 St Mary's Catholic Primary school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you are providing a service.

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2.1.3 St Mary's Catholic Primary school will not tolerate any bullying, harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

2.1.4 Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect you.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

3.1 All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

4. ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

4.1 This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.

4.2 Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of St Mary's Catholic Primary school.

4.3 In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

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

5. UNTRUE ALLEGATIONS

5.1 If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

6. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN (OR MAKE A COMPLAINT)

6.1 As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate manager or their superior. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved you should approach the Chair of Governors.

6.2 Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:

- the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
- the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

6.3 The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take action.

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6.4 Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

6.5 You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns.

6.6 You may invite a professional association representative or a friend to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

7. How St Mary's Catholic Primary school will respond

7.1 St Mary's Catholic Primary school will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.

7.2 Where appropriate, the matters raised may:

- be investigated by management, internal audit, or through the disciplinary process
- be referred to the police
- be referred to the external auditor
- form the subject of an independent inquiry.

7.3 In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle, which St Mary's Catholic Primary school will have in mind are the best interests of our service users and stakeholders. 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.

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

7.5 Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the responsible person will write to you:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- indicating how we propose to deal with the matter
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made
- supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms, and

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- telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

7.6 The amount of contact between the officers considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, St Mary's Catholic Primary school will seek further information from you.

7.7 Where any meeting is arranged, off-site if you so wish, you can be accompanied by a professional association representative or a friend.

7.8 St Mary's Catholic Primary school will take steps to minimise any difficulties, which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings St Mary's Catholic Primary school will arrange for you to receive advice about the procedure.

7.9 St Mary's Catholic Primary school accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, we will inform you of the outcome of any investigation.

8. THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

8.1 The HR Admin Officer (who is also the Monitoring Officer) has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. That officer maintains a record of concerns raised and the outcome (but in a form, which does not endanger your confidentiality) and will report as necessary to the St Mary's Catholic Primary school Governing Board.

9. HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

9.1 This policy is intended to provide you with an avenue within St Mary's Catholic Primary school to raise concerns. St Mary's Catholic Primary school hopes you will be satisfied with any action taken. If you are not, and if you feel it is right to take the matter outside St Mary's school, the following are possible contact points:

- Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), tel: 020 7404 6609, a registered charity whose services are free and strictly confidential
- your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- a relevant voluntary organisation
- the police.

9.2 If you do take the matter outside St Mary's Catholic Primary school, you should ensure that you do not disclose confidential information. Check with the contact point about that.

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This Whistleblowing Policy has been reviewed and adopted by the Governing Body in Autumn 2021 from the LA Model HR Policies and reviewed in Summer 2023. It will be updated in line with any LA updates.

Signed by Chair of Governors:



Signed by Headteacher:

