

Whistleblowing Policy



This Policy was reviewed on September 2023

Signed Governors J Anderson

Signed Head Teacher M Battersby

Next Review Date September 2025

St. Silas Church of England Primary School

Whistleblowing

Introduction

Existing good practice within our in terms of its systems of internal control both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the school operates ensures that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur. The whistleblowing policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the school. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.

The staff and governors seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. In the event that members of school staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, St Silas CE Primary School is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. We recognise that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising concerns within the school environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the school.

We are committed to creating a climate of openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved.

The provisions of this policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety and not matters of more general grievance which would be dealt with under the grievances procedures.

When might the whistleblowing policy apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which we consider should be dealt with under this policy includes:

- Manipulation of accounting records and finances
- Inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- Decision making for personal gain
- Any criminal activity
- Abuse of position, which may include inappropriate behaviour towards children
- Fraud and deceit
- Serious breaches of school procedures which may advantage a particular party (for example tampering with tender documentation, failure to register a personal interest)

What action should the whistleblower take?

We encourage the whistleblower to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to investigate the situation.

Concerns should initially be lodged with the Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher in the absence of the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher then the deputy should be informed, together with the Chair of Governors..

Child Protection concerns should be presented to the Headteacher and/or the Deputy

The whistleblower may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in written form marked private and confidential and addressed to one of the above named individuals. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible. In certain situations the whistleblower may seek to use the local authority. They can be contacted via Blackburn with Darwen Council offices.

How will the matter be progressed?

The individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation (the investigating officer(s)) will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of school staff, legal or personnel advisors, the police, the Department for Education and Employment the Council.

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigating officer(s) possibly, possibly in conjunction with the governing body, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third party referral such as the police.

The whistleblower will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the governing body and the Council.

If the whistleblower is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the investigating officers(s), the governing body and/or directed to the Council.

Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible we will seek to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistleblower and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals.

We will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the whistleblower or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

Raising unfounded malicious concerns

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate concerns.