

1. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

Employees who raise concerns that fall within the scope of other school procedures will not be dealt with under this Whistleblowing Procedure, but will be advised on the appropriate procedure to use. Such employees will still receive protection as detailed in the Whistleblowing Policy.

Employees, volunteers or contractors should normally raise concerns with their line manager, without needing to use the Whistleblowing Policy. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the malpractice.

Where a concern is serious, or where it is a concern about the line manager, or having made a report they believe that their manager has failed to take appropriate action, the employee, volunteer or contractor should contact the Headteacher. If concerns remain then the following should be contacted, in writing, in order:

- the Headteacher
- the Chair of Governors
- the Head of Internal Audit on 01702 534015 (where the concerns are of financial issues)

Concerns should be raised in writing, clearly marked “Whistleblowing” and placed in an envelope marked “Personal and Confidential”. The background and history of the concern (giving names, dates, and place where possible), and the reasons for the concern should be set out.

The earlier employees, workers or contractors express a concern, the easier it is to take action.

Employees may invite a trade union representative or work colleague to raise a matter on their behalf.

2. HOW THE SCHOOL WILL RESPOND

Once an employee, volunteer or contractor has raised their concern under the Whistleblowing Policy with one of the postholders referred to in paragraph 1 above, then the postholder will make initial enquiries to decide if an investigation is appropriate and if so what form the investigation should take.

The employee, volunteer or contractor will be advised of the following:-

- who is considering the issue;
- how that person can be contacted;

- whether their further assistance may be needed.

The person responsible for considering the issue will write to the employee, volunteers or contractor summarising their concern and setting out how the school proposes to handle it, if requested to do so. The employee, volunteer or contractor will also be requested to state any personal interest they may have in the matter.

The overriding principle which the school will have in mind is the public interest. 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. The action taken by the school will depend on the nature of the concern and may:

- be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation;
- be investigated internally;
- be referred to the police;
- be referred to the external auditor;
- form the subject of an independent inquiry.

The amount of contact between the employee, volunteer or contractor and those investigating the concerns will depend on the concerns raised, but the school may need to seek further information from the employee, volunteer or contractor. Any meetings may be arranged on or off site and an employee may be accompanied by a friend, union or professional body representative.

While the purpose of this Whistleblowing Policy is to enable the school to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, they will provide as much feedback to the employee, worker or contractor as they properly can. If requested, confirmation of the response may be provided in writing. It may not, however, be possible to advise the precise action that will be taken where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed by the school to someone else.

All concerns raised under the Whistleblowing Policy will be notified to the Headteacher who is responsible for this Whistleblowing Policy and maintains a register of all concerns raised and their outcomes.

All concerns of a financial nature will also be notified to the Head of Internal Audit.

3. HOW A CONCERN CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to provide employees, volunteers or contractors with the reassurance they may need to raise concerns internally and that they will be satisfied with any action taken. However, if they are not, and feel that it is appropriate to take the matter outside the school or if they feel unable to raise their concerns internally, the school would rather they raised the matter with an appropriate regulator than not at all. The following are possible contact points:-

- Local Council Member.
- The designated independent organisation (independent charity “Public Concern at Work” which provides a confidential helpline on 020 7404 6609).
- The Audit Commission.

