



The **Affinity** Federation

Willenhall Community Primary School and **Whitmore Park** Primary School

Whistleblowing policy

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The Governors of The Federation are committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we encourage staff and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the School's work to come forward and voice those concerns (NB. This is not the same as malicious complaints). Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within a School. However they may not feel able to express their concerns because they believe that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues, the School or the Local Authority (LA). They may fear harassment or victimisation.

Although in the large majority of cases staff with concerns should share those concerns with their immediate manager, it is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable School staff to raise concerns within the School (or Local Authority) rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside of the organisation. Concerns could be about unlawful conduct, serious financial or other malpractice, mistreatment of staff, students or visitors or wilful damage to the School environment.

1. Aims and Scope of this Policy

This policy aims to:

- Provide avenues for staff to raise concerns and to receive feedback on any action taken
- Allow staff to take the matter further if dissatisfied with the School or LA response
- Reassure staff that they will be protected from reprisals for Whistleblowing in good faith

The concern may be about something that:

- Is unlawful or against School Policy, LA's financial regulations or council Standing Orders
- Falls below established standards
- Amounts to impropriety
- Places the health and safety of any person at risk

2. How to Blow the Whistle

2.1. Within School

The first step is to raise the concern with a line manager, or if the concern involves that line manager to raise it with the manager's line manager. If this is not possible the matter should be raised with the Head Teacher or Chair of the Governing Body. If neither of those avenues are appropriate then employees can contact the Internal Audit Manager, who can be contacted on 024 7683 3747 for financial issues. For all other concerns employees can contact the Monitoring Officer for Legal and Democratic Services on 024 7683 3700.

All contact will be treated in the strictest confidence. Initial enquiries will then take place to establish whether an investigation is appropriate. Some concerns can be resolved by agreed action without investigation. As soon as practicably possible, but usually within 10 working days a written response will be provided. A concern may be investigated by management, internal audit or through the disciplinary procedure, referred to the police, referred to the external auditor or be the subject of an internal inquiry. Employees will be encouraged to put their names to allegations as anonymous allegations do not carry as much weight and the earlier the concern is expressed the easier it is to deal with it quickly and effectively. If however the matter ends up in either Court or with the LA's own disciplinary procedure an employee may be required to attend hearings as a witness. In such circumstances either the school or LA will provide appropriate support.

2.2. Outside School

Coventry City Council (CCC) have launched the Whistleblowing Policy with The Public Concern at Work. The Governors of The Federation have aligned themselves with CCC policy and procedure. If employees feel that they cannot raise their concern internally they can contact The Public Concern at Work Agency (an independent charity who can provide impartial advice and help), for help and advice. Their free helpline for employees concerned about malpractice in the workplace can be contacted - 0207 404 6609.

The Governors encourage employees to put their name to an allegation. The Federation will not tolerate victimisation or harassment of any employee who had made an allegation. Any employee or manager making false allegations, either maliciously or for personal gain, could face disciplinary action.