



Whitmore Park Primary School

Whistleblowing policy

School Owner:	School Business Manager	Published date:	November 2023
Approved by Head Teacher:	J. McGibney	Date:	November 2023
Approved by Governors:	Karl Miles & Rosella Brennan	Date:	November 2023
Date to be reviewed:	November 2024		

Contents

1. Aims and Scope of this Policy	2
2. How to Blow the Whistle	3
2.1. Within School.....	3
2.2. Outside School.....	3
3. What happens to the concern raised?.....	4
3.1. Protection for those raising concerns	4
3.2. Confidentiality.....	5
4. Monitoring.....	5

The Governors of Whitmore Park Primary School 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:

Chief Internal Auditor
One Friargate
Station Square
Coventry
CV1 2GR

The Council's Monitoring Officer
One Friargate
Station Square
Coventry
CV1 2GR

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 Whitmore Park Primary School 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 School encourages the use of this policy in order to raise whistleblowing concerns. It is anticipated that issues would be raised within the School in the first instance to allow the School to respond to any concern. However, if you feel that it

is right to report the matter outside the School, then there are prescribed contacts to whom disclosures can be made. Prescribed persons include: the Information Commissioner, the Environment Agency, Public Health England, Health and Safety Executive, etc. Details can be found at **Whistleblowing for employees - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**

If you report the matter outside the School, you should ensure that you do not disclose confidential information. Disclosure to a person who is not a prescribed person or to someone who is not specified in this policy may constitute a breach of confidentiality and a breach of the employee Code of Conduct. Any breach of the Code of Conduct could lead to disciplinary action. Furthermore, disclosure to someone else will mean that the legal protection for whistleblowers is lost.

The Governors encourage employees to put their name to an allegation. The Governing Body 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.

3. What happens to the concern raised?

If the person dealing with the concern deems it necessary to hold any meetings with you, you have the right to be accompanied by a trade union or other representative. The meeting can be arranged away from the normal place of work, if requested.

You will be listened to and your concern will be taken seriously. The action taken by the School will depend on the nature of the concern. Any concern raised under this policy, will be acknowledged in writing within 7 days. This will: acknowledge that the concern has been received; summarise the details of the concern; and identify who is dealing with the matter. The person dealing with the matter will decide on the appropriate course of action.

The School understands that individuals raising a concern need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed and will notify them when the whistleblowing policy process has been completed. However, the information provided may be limited in accordance with other legislative provisions, such as the Data Protection Act 1998.

3.1. Protection for those raising concerns

If you raise a concern under this policy you are protected from suffering any detriment i.e. any disadvantage on the ground that you have made a protected disclosure. A disclosure will only qualify for protection if you have a reasonable belief that it is made in the public interest.

The protection provided to employees raising concerns cannot be given to third parties. The School cannot guarantee protection to employees of third party organisations. However, we expect contractors to be aware of the legal obligations in relation to Whistleblowing Policy and to act in accordance with the requirements.

The School does not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment and will take action to protect you if you have raised a concern using this policy.

3.2. Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained as far as is reasonably practical. Individuals should be aware that actions taken as a result of their report may lead to their identity being revealed, either by inference or as a result of disciplinary or legal proceedings. If this should happen, the School will not tolerate you being subjected to any detriment because you have made a protected disclosure.

4. Monitoring

Monitoring of the Whistleblowing Procedure will be undertaken by the School's Governing Body.

The Chair of Governors will maintain a record of all concerns brought to his/her attention and any action taken. All officers who investigate a concern should provide the Chair of Governors with sufficient information to enable him/her to complete the record.

The Chair of Governors will produce an annual report for the relevant Governors meeting which will comprise of a summary of the concerns raised and lessons learned with the aim of ensuring best practice across the School. The report will not disclose any names and will not undermine confidentiality or data protection.

Data Protection

The personal data that you provide will be used for the purposes of investigating your Whistleblowing Concern and for producing statistical data to enable the school's management to monitor the effectiveness of the school's Whistleblowing Procedure. The information you give will be held securely and in confidence. We may only share this if there is a legal obligation or business requirement. You provide this personal data with your consent and can withdraw your consent at any point by contacting the school. We retain personal data in line with our Record Retention Schedule. More information regarding how the School handles your personal data can be found on the School website.