



Whistleblowing Procedure

The Governors of St Monica's Catholic Primary School have adopted Warrington Borough Council's Whistleblowing Policy with amendments to reflect how it will operate in school.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

DOCUMENT STATUS

Version	Date	Action
1	February 2000	New procedure
1	Sept 2007	Contact details amended

	May 2012	Reviewed and insertion of Governing Body
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	Spring 2017	Reviewed and presented to Finance Committee at St. Monica's
	Autumn 2018	Reviewed and presented to Safeguarding Governor at St. Monica's
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CONTENTS

PAGE

1. Introduction	3
2. Aims and Scope of the Procedure	3
3. Safeguards	4
4. Raising a concern	4
5. How the School will Respond	5
6. Taking Matters Further	6
7. The Responsible Officer	7
8. Alternative Procedures	7
Useful addresses and telephone numbers	8

Note: where the Governing Body is used, this refers to the School's Governing Body

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Governing Body is committed to the highest possible standards of good governance, openness, probity and accountability. In line with these commitments, we encourage employees and other, specific groups of workers (see paragraph below), with serious concerns about irregularity, wrongdoing, or serious failures of standards of work, to come forward and voice such concerns without fear of any reprisal.

2. AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE PROCEDURE

2.1 This procedure aims to:

- ensure the highest standards of service delivery and good governance;
- ensure that the Governing Body does not overlook any problems, which it would be in both the Governing Body's and the school's interest to resolve;
- ensure that concerns can be resolved internally, wherever possible, reducing the need for issues to be raised externally.

2.2 It applies to all members of the school community, whatever their position, role or responsibility in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

2.3 It does not apply to self – employed professionals, such as free lance training consultants, or to voluntary workers. That is not to say that their concerns should not be brought to the Governing Body's attention, since they will be investigated in exactly the same way, but that the provisions relating to protection of employment are not applicable.

2.4 The Governing Body has a separate Grievance Procedure to enable employees to raise individual and/or collective grievances relating to their own employment. This Procedure is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures (see paragraph 8 for further information).

2.5 Such concerns may be about:

- a criminal act
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation
- a failure to comply with school policies, procedures or directives of the head teacher;
- a miscarriage of justice;

- danger in health and safety;
- any damage to the environment;
- any financial irregularity;
- an attempt to cover up any of these.

3. SAFEGUARDS

3.1 Harassment or Victimisation

The Governing Body recognises that the decision to raise a concern can be a difficult one to make because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. The Governing Body will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect employees who raise a concern in good faith.

3.2 Confidentiality

The Governing Body will do its best to ensure confidentiality for the person raising the concern, where this is requested. However, it must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and signed statement may be required as part of the evidence. Only in those cases of the most serious of allegations, where the Governing Body must take immediate action, should it be necessary to reveal the source of the allegation. In all cases, the person raising the concern will be notified that this is the case in advance.

3.3 Anonymous Allegations

This Procedure encourages anyone raising a concern to put their name to their allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they will be considered at the discretion of the Governing Body.

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 to attributable sources.

3.4 Untrue Allegations

Where an employee makes an allegation in good faith which is not confirmed by the investigation no action will take place. If, however, an employee makes a malicious or vexatious allegation, disciplinary action will be take.

4. RAISING A CONCERN

- 4.1 As a first step concerns should be raised with the Headteacher (or in the Headteacher's absence with the Deputy Headteacher).
- 4.2 Concerns are better raised in writing, at the outset, and people are encouraged to set out the background and history of the concerns, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason causing particular concern. For those who feel unable to put their concerns in writing they can telephone, or arrange to meet the Headteacher/ Chair of Governors.
- 4.3 The earlier a concern is raised, the easier it is for the Governing Body to take appropriate action.
- 4.4 Those raising a concern will not be expected to prove the truth of an allegation. However, it must be possible to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for concerns. Employees may invite their trade union representative, or another colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates, to raise a matter on their behalf.
- 4.5 Any concerns about the Headteacher directly should be reported to the Chair of Governors.
- 4.6 Concerns about financial matters should be addressed to the chair of the Governor's Finance Committee, Mrs. Amanda Lawrie Simmons, and concerns about safeguarding matters should be addressed to the Safeguarding Governor, Mrs. Clare Wadsworth.

5. HOW THE SCHOOL WILL RESPOND

- 5.1 The action taken by the School will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:
- be investigated internally;
 - be referred to the Police;
 - be referred to the Schools Legal Advisor
 - form the subject of an independent enquiry
- 5.2 In order to protect individuals and the Governing Body, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take (for example, where there is already a procedure in place for dealing with a particular concern, the matter will be pursued in accordance with that procedure).

5.3 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. The Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) to whom the matter has been referred, will write to the person raising the concern within ten working days to:

- acknowledge that the concern has been received;
- indicate how the school proposes to respond to the concern raise;
- give an estimation of how long it will take to provide a formal response;
- inform the person raising the concern whether any initial enquiries have been made;
- inform the person raising the concern whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.

5.4 The Headteacher/ Chair of Governors undertakes to carry out and conclude any investigations as quickly as the circumstances of the case permit. The degree of contact between those considering the matters and the person raising the concern will vary according to the circumstances of each case, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, additional information will be sought from the individual raising the concern.

5.5 Where a meeting is arranged, an employee has the right to be accompanied by their trade union representative, or by a workplace colleague.

5.6 The school will take all possible steps to minimise any difficulties an employee might experience as a result of raising their concern. For example, if the proceedings progress into either disciplinary or criminal proceedings, the school will give any necessary advice about the procedures involved.

5.7 Subject to legal constraints, the school will ensure that the employee is provided with information about the outcomes of the investigation.

6. TAKING MATTERS FURTHER

6.1 One of the aims of this procedure is to provide employees and others with an avenue to raise any concerns they might have internally in the first instance.

6.2 For those who believe that the concerns they have raised have not been dealt with satisfactorily, or, who believe that their cause for concern is so great that it ought to be considered externally, their first point of contact should be with:

- the Chair of Governors, or
- WBC Governors and Advisory Service,
- Diocese

6.3 In exceptionally serious circumstances (for example, suspected sexual abuse of a child), or, whether having already raised the concern the employee believes that there is serious malpractice, or that a danger or risk exists, contact can then be made with:

- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations; the Ofsted whistleblowing hotline number is 0300 1233155 and the e – mail address is whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk.
- A Whistleblowing hotline and an on-line web form where details of any concerns can be logged is provided by WBC. The information provided goes to Internal Audit, who decide how to proceed.
Whistleblowing line number: 01925 442360
On-line web form (Ctrl+click this link)
- the Police;

6.4 Employees who are members of a Trade Union may also find it helpful to contact their trade union representative, who will have access to further professional advice from their Branch and Regional Officers.

6.5 Employees and others taking matters outside the School need to ensure that they do not disclose confidential or privileged information (for example, information which may have been produced in contravention of the Data Protection Act, or the Children’s Act).

6.6 The raising of minor issues externally in the first instance (for example, to the local media) could potentially diminish an individual’s right to protection from action being taken against them by the Governing Body. In order for employees to be certain, completely independent advice about whether to “blow the whistle” externally first can be obtained from an independent charitable organisation called Public Concern at Work (address and telephone number given at the end of this procedure).

7. THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

7.1 The Headteacher or Chair of Governors acts as the school’s Responsible Officer and are responsible for the maintenance and operation of this procedure. They will retain all records of concerns raised and the outcomes in a form that will not endanger an employee’s confidentiality where this has been elected, and will report as necessary to the Governing Body.

8. ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES

8.1 The Governing Body has a number of formal complaints procedures in operation, which, depending on the circumstances of the issue in question, may be more appropriate.

8.2 If in doubt, the Headteacher can provide advice about the most appropriate procedure to use.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

10.1 Although every attempt has been made to make this procedure as clear as possible, it is appreciated that there may be a desire to seek further independent advice before deciding whether to raise a concern under this procedure. Some useful contacts have been included below:

USEFUL NAMES AND ADDRESSES

1. Chair of Governors – Mrs Louise Barker
Telephone: 01925 267609 (school office)

2. Public Concern At Work
Suite 306
16 Baldwins Gardens
London
EC1N 7RJ

Telephone: 020 7404 6609
Fax: 020 7404 6576
Enquiries: whistle@pcaw.co.uk
Helpline: helpline@pcaw.co.uk

3. Health & Safety Executive
Grove House
Skerton Road
Manchester
M16 0RB

Infoline: 0845 3450055

Minicom: 0845 4089577
Fax: 0845 4089566
E – mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com