



Whistle Blowing Policy

Updated: December 2022
To be reviewed: October 2024
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**EQUALITY SCHEME
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR
WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY**

Staff / Committee involved in development:	Finance / Health Safety Committee; Headteacher / Bursar	
For use by:	Staff, Governors and Parent/Carers	
This policy relates to statutory guidance:	Data Protection Act 1998 Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018	
Key related Farndon Policies:	Grievances policy Harassment and Bullying procedures Safeguarding Policy Child Protection Policy	
Equality Impact Assessment: Does this document impact on any of the following groups? If YES, state positive or negative impact, and complete an Equality Impact Assessment Form or action plan, and attach.		
Groups:	Yes/ No	Positive/Negative impact
Disability	No	
Race	No	
Gender	No	
Age	No	
Sexual Orientation	No	
Religious & Belief	No	
Gender Reassignment	No	
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No	
Pregnancy & Maternity	No	
Other	No	
Reviewed by	Leadership and Management	
Agreed by	Finance / Health Safety Committee	
Next Policy review date	December 2024	
A copy of this form, and any related impact assessment form or action plan must be sent to the school office		

This document is a statement of the aims and principles of the School, for ensuring the confidentiality of sensitive information relating to staff, pupils, parents and governors

FARNDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING PROCEDURE ('Whistle Blowing Policy')

INTRODUCTION

This procedure has been developed with the assistance of and guidance from Cheshire County and is designed for the use of all school employees.

However, it can also be used by agency staff, other people acting in a similar capacity to an employee, by Contractors and their staff and other individuals providing services/support to the School (e.g. volunteers). The same principles in terms of protection from harassment and victimisation, confidentiality, support and information on the School's response will apply to all reports made under this procedure.

As a public service organisation, the School will use public (and any other) funds prudently and apply the highest standards of conduct throughout the organisation. This procedure encourages staff to help maintain these standards, by enabling you to draw attention to any concerns which you may have about the operation of the School. Initially the School will seek to deal with your concerns through its internal procedures. Public disclosure may well be justified at some point but you are encouraged not to pursue this angle until the School has had the opportunity to investigate the concern. Premature or unnecessary publicity may impede proper investigations, hurt individuals or damage the School's reputation.

Examples of concerns that may be raised under the procedure are:

- Law breaking.
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks (to anyone).
- Damage to the environment.
- Unauthorised use of money.
- Dishonesty, fraud and corruption.
- Sexual, racial, physical or financial abuse of clients.
- Other unethical conduct.
- Failure to observe standards or policies.
- Any other form of inappropriate conduct.

The School's normal operational or managerial channels are sufficiently open and effective for most concerns to be raised that way. However, this will not always be appropriate or possible and that is why we have a Confidential Reporting Procedure. It offers the means to raise concerns you may have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of staff or Governors or other people acting on behalf of the School. A concern may arise, for example, from worries about failure to observe standards or policies being circumvented or improper conduct.

The procedure does not cover concerns that are covered by other procedures. For example, an employment problem may well be covered by the Grievance Procedure or Personal Harassment & Bullying Procedure.

HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION

You may be put off raising a concern because you are worried about reprisals. If you raise a concern in good faith and genuinely believed it to be well founded, you should have nothing to fear. School will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including covert pressure) and will do all it can to protect you. If you are involved in other procedures, such as disciplinary or redundancy, these be kept quite separate from the investigation of your complaint.

You will not be penalised in any way, where you make an allegation in good faith which is not confirmed after it has been investigated. A concern that is raised frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain may result in action being taken against you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your concern will be treated in strict confidence, within this Procedure, and everything done to keep your identity secret (if this is what you want). However, it should be noted that you *may* have to be a witness at some point. It might then not be possible to keep your identity fully secret.

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

An anonymous concern is likely to carry much less weight than one which is signed and may be more difficult to verify; the investigating manager would have to decide whether or not to accept it. This decision would depend on the seriousness of the issue, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation in other ways. Signed concerns are always better.

RAISING A CONCERN

Who to approach

- There is a list of the managers and others with whom you can raise a concern (see the last page for contact addresses and phone numbers). When deciding who it would be best to approach, take into account the type of matter, its seriousness and its sensitivity – and who may be involved.

How to raise your concern

You can raise your concern orally (i.e. face to face or over the phone) or in writing. If you write, mark the envelope 'personal and confidential'. Whichever way you choose, please give as much information as you can. Unless you wish to raise your concern anonymously, remember to give your name, and, if you are an employee, your job title, where you work. Please say if you do not want to be

contacted at work (if so, give your home address and phone number). If you are not employed by the School, please let us know your relationship with the School (*for example, contractor, partner organisation, and council tax-payer.*)

The following headings should help you organise your thoughts, but do not have to follow them exactly:

- What it is that you are concerned about
- Why you are concerned and the background information.
- Any other procedures which you have already used - and what happened.
- The people who are involved and where they work.
- Dates or periods of time.
- The names and jobs of any other people who will (or may) support your concern.

The earlier a concern is raised the better. Whilst you will not be expected to prove that allegations are true, you will need to show that you have a reasonable basis for your concern.

You may want to discuss the matter with one or two colleagues first. Their support could be helpful. There is nothing to stop two or more of you putting your names to a concern.

Involvement of your trade union or professional association, or other support such as a friend.

You may ask your trade union or professional association or other support, to raise a matter on your behalf. In this case - if you wish - you can also remain anonymous when the concern is first raised. However, you may have to be involved personally if the matter goes further.

You may also have your trade union, professional association or a friend at any meeting or interview.

Help with the procedure

Any of the following will help you to understand the procedure:

- The manager for your team.
- The Personnel Manager for your service (names are available from the County HR department).
- Head of Audit & Risk Management
- County Solicitor (who is also the County Council Monitoring Officer).

HOW YOUR CONCERN WILL BE DEALT WITH

As a start, discreet enquiries will be made by a senior manager to decide whether an investigation is needed and if so, how it should be carried out. This will help protect everyone concerned. The overriding principle will be the public interest.

If this first, testing, stage shows that the concern should be followed up, there will either be a special examination or another procedure will be used, if appropriate. Examples of special procedures are the Council's Disciplinary Procedure, the Personal Harassment and Bullying Procedure or child protection procedures. It may be necessary to involve other agencies, for example the police or the Council's external auditors. Any urgent action will be taken before the investigation starts. It may be possible of course, to sort out the concern without a detailed investigation.

WHAT YOU WILL BE TOLD

Within 10 working days of your concern being received, the manager who carries out the initial enquiries will write to you confirming:

- What initial enquiries have been made?
- How your concern has been or will be dealt with.
- How long any further action may take (as far as this can be known).
- What, if any, further investigation or work is planned and how you may be involved.

The amount of contact you have with the people considering the matter will depend on many things. These include the type of concern, the potential difficulties of investigating it and the availability of information. You may need to provide more help. Wherever possible, you will be told the final outcome of an investigation.

PERSONAL SUPPORT

The School will do all it can to minimise any difficulties which you may have because you have raised your concern. As far as possible, you will be offered personal support, which the manager leading the investigation will arrange. For example, if you had to give evidence in disciplinary or criminal proceedings, full advice about the procedure would be given to you.

IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE

This procedure is meant to give everyone an effective way to raise a concern *within* the School (and if possible, to resolve it internally). You should not feel that you have to take an issue outside the School to get satisfaction. However, if you are still unhappy after using this procedure (and getting a final response), you are entitled to consider taking your concern elsewhere. If you do this, these are some contacts which are available:

- The Council's external auditors (see the last page for contact details).
- Your trade union.
- A Citizens Advice Bureau.

- A relevant professional or regulatory body.
- A relevant voluntary organisation.
- The police.
- OFSTED

If you raise the matter outside the School, you must take into account the rules about disclosing confidential information (for Council employees, see Section 12 of the Code of Conduct).

Contact Details

Anyone wishing to report under this procedure will contact one of the following:

The Headteacher Andy Walker	Mr Andy Walker c/o Farndon Primary School, Churton Road, Farndon, Chester head@farndon.cheshire.sch.uk
The Chair of the GB	Miss Lindsey Lancelotte c/o Farndon Primary School, Churton Road, Farndon, Chester ljlancelotte@gmail.com
A member of the Finance Committee	Mrs Sue Ames Farndon Primary School, Churton Road, Farndon, Chester smal2000@aol.com
Any other school Governor as on the main Governor list	Miss Fiona Henderson, Mrs Carol Weaver carol@weaver2541.freemove.co.uk
Head of Audit and Risk Management	Helen Peters. HQ Building Nicholas Street Chester CH1 2NP 01244 977375 helen.peters@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk Alternative contact Megan Brown 01244 976272
Head of Human Resources	Debbie Thompson HQ Building Nicholas Street

	Chester Cheshire CH1 2NP 01244 976265 e:mail deborah.thompson@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Chief Executive	Andrew Lewis, HQ Building Nicholas Street Chester Cheshire CH1 2NP 01244 972033 or e:mail andrew.lewis@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk Deputy Chief Exec Delyth Curtis 01244 976235 delyth.curtis@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Dated:

Headteacher: Andy Walker

Signature:

Chair of Governors: Lindsey Lancelotte

Signature:

On behalf of the Governing Body

Review Date: