

St. Paul's C of E Primary School

Documentation Information and Control

Confidential Reporting Policy or Whistle-blowing

<i>Current Status:</i>	Reviewed 2018
<i>Review date:</i>	July each year
<i>Persons responsible for review:</i>	The Governing Body in consultation with the Head Teacher
<i>Reference to other documents:</i>	Child Protection Policy Confidentiality Policy Safeguarding Policy Equal Opportunities Policy Health and Safety Policy

St. Paul's C of E Primary School

Confidential Reporting Policy

or

Whistle-blowing

1. Rationale

- 1.1 Recognising its historic foundation, St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne, exists
 - (1) to glorify Almighty God, and
 - (2) to serve the community by providing, within the context of biblical belief and practice, an excellent education.
- 1.2 The Governing Body recognises that all people owe their existence to God and are dependent upon him for their preservation day by day.
- 1.3 The Governing Body acknowledges that mankind, male and female, was created in and as the image of God and thus all people are always to be shown care, love, and respect from conception to the grave.
- 1.4 The Governing Body recognises that all people are accountable to God for all that they think, say, and do, including the way they treat children and other adults.
- 1.5 The Governing Body shall ensure that St Paul's School is a safe and secure working environment in which all staff, contractors, suppliers, volunteers and pupils are appropriately and properly protected, respected and valued.
- 1.6 The Governing Body is committed to the promotion and maintenance of the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability within the School so that anyone who confidentially reports a concern relating to malpractice

will do so without fear of being disadvantaged, discriminated against or victimised.

1.7 The Governing Body expects all employees and any other person who has a concern about any aspect of the school's work to voice that concern.

1.8 It is recognised that most cases will need to proceed on a confidential basis.

1.9 All concerns shall be taken seriously and carefully investigated.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to promote and protect responsible whistleblowing when staff, contractors, suppliers or volunteers have a concern about malpractice in the workplace.

2.2 All staff, contractors, suppliers, volunteers and others who have a concern about malpractice in the workplace are expected to make known their concern in line with the procedures set out below.

2.3 It is recognised that employees are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong in their place of employment.

2.4 It is also recognised that some in their places of work may be reluctant to express a concern because they do not want to be seen as disloyal to their colleagues or employer, or because they fear harassment or victimisation.

2.5 This policy covers concerns that

- (1) fall outside other policies and procedures or
- (2) when it is thought that a relevant policy or procedure has not been followed.

2.6 Concerns referred to in paragraph 2.5(2) above may include:

- (a) practices which fail to safeguard children or young people;
- (b) the sexual or physical abuse of service users;

- (c) conduct which is an offence or a breach of law;
- (d) disclosures relating to miscarriages of justice;
- (e) health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees;
- (f) damage to the environment;
- (g) the unauthorised use of public funds;
- (h) fraud and corruption;
- (i) an attempt to prevent disclosure of any of the above; or
- (j) any other conduct which gives cause for concern.

2.7 Concerns referred to in paragraph 2.5(1) above include behaviours which:

- (a) contravene biblical standards of morality;
- (b) the character and ethos of the school;
- (c) the Governing Body's policies; or
- (d) any other improper conduct.

2.8 This policy does not replace but supplements the school's complaints and grievance procedures, and other procedures that deal with harassment and health and safety concerns.

3. How to raise a concern

3.1 First you raise a concern with the Head Teacher.

3.2 If your concern relates to the Head Teacher you are to raise it with the Chairman of the Governing Body.

3.3 If the Head Teacher has a concern about a member of staff she is to follow the appropriate procedures for specific areas of concern.

3.4 If a concern of the Head Teacher relates to member of the governing body advice should be sought from the Chairman of the Governors or, if it concerns the Chairman, the Diocesan Director of Education.

- 3.5 The person receiving notification of a concern will inform the Head of Legal Services that a confidential report has been received and provide him or her with a copy.
- 3.6 If the concern relates to financial irregularities or failures of financial controls the Head Teacher or Chair of the Governors receiving the report must immediately notify the Chief Internal Auditor, the Chief Education Officer and the Diocesan Director of Education.
- 3.7 A concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.
- 3.8 A written report should be made on the pro-forma available on the Schools Extranet.
- 3.9 The report is to be sent to the Head Teacher or the Chair of the Governors and a copy sent to the Head of Legal Services.
- 3.10 The Head of Legal Services will monitor how the complaint is handled and ensure that the requirements of this policy are fulfilled.
- 3.11 It should be noted, generally speaking, that the earlier a concern is expressed, the easier it will be to take action.
- 3.12 Advice and guidance on how matters of concern may be pursued can be obtained from the Head of Organisational Development, Room 7, Civic Centre, on extension 25200. Confidential independent advice is available from the charity Public Concern at Work on 0207 404 6609 or their web site www.pcaw.co.uk.
- 3.13 A trade union or professional association representative or a fellow worker may be present during any meeting or interview with a person who raises a concern.
- 3.14 A concern may be raised through a trade union or professional association who will provide advice and support as appropriate.

4. How a concern will be dealt with

- 4.1 The Governing Body or Head Teacher will respond to a concern.
- 4.2 Within 3 working days of a concern being raised a written acknowledgement of it will be sent to the person who raised it.
- 4.3 Within 10 working days a further response will be sent which:
 - (a) indicates how it is proposed to deal with the matter;
 - (b) gives an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
 - (c) states whether any enquiries have been made; and
 - (d) supplies information on staff support mechanisms.
- 4.4 When appropriate, matters raised may be:
 - (a) investigated by the school, the governing body, the Local Authority, Internal Audit, or a disciplinary process;
 - (b) referred to the police or other statutory agency; or
 - (c) referred to the External Auditor.
- 4.5 To protect individuals and those about whom a concern is raised, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.
- 4.6 A concerns or allegation which fall within the scope of specific procedures (*for example*, child protection or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
- 4.7 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.
- 4.8 If urgent action is required it will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
- 4.9 The amount of contact between the raiser of a concern and the individual considering the issue will depend on the nature of the matter raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided.

- 4.10 If necessary, the investigating officer will seek further information from the person who raises a concern.
- 4.11 The Governing Body will take steps to minimize any difficulties which may be experienced as a result of raising a concern (for example, if a person who raises a concern is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings the City Council will arrange for appropriate advice about the procedure).
- 4.12 Subject to legal constraints, a person who raises a concern will be informed of the outcome of an investigation.

5. Safeguards for complainants

5.1 Harassment or victimisation

- (a) The Governing Body, being committed to good practice and high standards, will be supportive of its staff.
- (b) The Governing body will fulfil its responsibility to ensure that a person who raises a concern is not harassed, victimised or disadvantaged as a result of raising a concern.
- (c) Any employee who engages in any form of victimisation or harassment against a person who raises a concern may be subject to disciplinary action.
- (d) Any governor who engages in any form of victimisation or harassment against a person raising a concern may be subject to appropriate sanction.

5.2 Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence whenever possible and every effort will be made to preserve anonymity if it is desired.

5.3 *Anonymous allegations*

- (a) Any person raising a concern is encouraged to put their name to your allegation whenever possible.
- (b) A concern expressed anonymously is less powerful but it will be considered the Head Teacher or Governing Body.

5.4 *Untrue allegations*

- (a) An allegation made in good faith, but not confirmed by an investigation, will not result in action being taken against the person who raised it.
- (b) If an allegation is made maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the person who raised it.

6. Review

The governors shall review this policy every year.