



Alexandra Primary School

Whistle Blowing Policy

Governor Responsible	Safeguarding Committee
Status	Non Statutory
Last reviewed	March 2018

1. Introduction

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within a school.

They may not express their concerns for fear of harassment or victimisation or because by speaking up they may be considered disloyal to their colleagues or the school. In the event that members of Alexandra school staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern the Governing body has established the following whistle blowing policy, or code of practice, which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion. This should also be read in conjunction with the LA's Whistleblowing Policy.

At Alexandra we are committed to the highest possible standards and seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard to high standards of conduct and integrity. In line with that commitment and our duties under the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, we will:

- encourage employees and others who have serious concerns about any aspect of the School's work to voice those concerns;
- recognise that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis;
- enable employees to participate without fear of reprisals;
- enable employees to raise serious concerns within the school in a constructive and positive way rather than overlook a problem.

2 Aims and Scope of the Policy

2.1 The policy provides avenues for an employee to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken. The policy allows employees to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the school's decision;

2.2 The Policy does not replace:

- the school's complaints procedure;
- its grievance procedure;
- managerial responsibilities

2.3 Employees' concerns may be about actions that include:

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of law;
- disclosures relating to miscarriages of justice;
- health & safety risks to public or employees;
- health and safety or safeguarding risks to children
- damage to the environment;
- unauthorised use of public funds;
- possible fraud and corruption;
- breaches of the school's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders or policies;
- falling below established professional standards or practices;
- improper or unethical conduct

3 Safeguards

3.1 Harassment or Victimisation:

The school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for malpractice. It will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect an employee when a concern is raised in good faith.

If an employee is the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures when they raise their concerns, then those procedures will not automatically be affected. The information provided would be assessed in the light of the new circumstances and a decision taken as to how, if at all, those proceedings should be affected.

3.2 Confidentiality: The school will endeavour to protect the identity of an employee who raises a concern.

However, as a result of the investigation process a statement may be required, as part of the evidence and this will be seen by all parties.

3.3 Anonymous Allegations: Employees are encouraged to put their name to an allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they will be considered at the discretion of the school. The key factors to be taken into account in these circumstances will be the:

- seriousness of the issues raised;
- credibility of the concern and likelihood of confirming the allegation.

3.4 Malicious or Vexatious Allegations: When an allegation is made in good faith, but is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the employee voicing the concern. If, however, an employee makes a malicious or vexatious allegation, disciplinary action may be taken against that employee may be the subject of consideration under the provisions of the school complaints policy.

4. Procedure

4.1 Contact Persons : Employees should initially raise concerns with:

- a) Their Line Manager. However, this does depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the matter that concerns them. If the matter is more serious, any of the following persons should be contacted :-
- b) A member of SLT
- c) The Head Teacher
- d) The Chair of Governors (if the concern is with or about the Head Teacher)

4.2. Concerns are better raised in writing and should incorporate relevant information about specific incidents. The background and history of the concern including names, dates and places where possible and the reason why employees are particularly concerned about certain situations should also be provided. If an employee is unable to express their concerns in writing then they can contact the appropriate person by telephone or arrange to meet them.

4.3 The earlier a concern is expressed the easier it will be to take appropriate action.

4.4 Although employees are not expected to prove the validity of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for raising the concern.

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:

- Resolved without the need for investigation
- Investigated internally;
- Referred to the police / social services / The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)
- Referred to the External Auditor; or
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry.

5.2 In order to protect individuals and the School, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations, which fall under the scope of specific procedures (e.g. Social Services), will be referred for consideration under those procedures.

5.3 As soon as possible, and within 10 days, after a concern has been raised the School will write to the employee concerned to acknowledge the issue that has been raised and to indicate the future course of action.

5.4 The amount of contact between the employee raising the concern and the persons considering the issue will depend on the nature of the matters raised. An employee may be approached to provide further information.

5.5 If a meeting is arranged then an employee has a right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or some other person of their choice.

5.6 An employee raising a concern will need to be assured that the issue has been appropriately addressed. Therefore the School, subject to legal constraints, will inform the employee about the outcomes of any investigations.

6. How to take a concern further

6.1 This Policy is intended to provide employees with an avenue to raise concerns within the School / LA, hopefully to a satisfactory conclusion. Where all internal avenues have been exhausted, however, it may be necessary for an employee to take the concerns outside the Council and these are possible contact points:

- The External auditor
- Relevant professional bodies or organisations
- The LA children and Young People's directorate
- The police

This does not prevent staff from seeking their own legal advice.

If a member of staff raises their concerns outside the school, they should ensure that it is to one of the above prescribed contacts. A public disclosure to anyone else could take them outside the protection of the Public Interest Disclosure Act and of this policy. They should not disclose information that is confidential to the school or to anyone else, such as a client or contractor of the school, except to those included in the list of prescribed contacts.

Agreed by Management Committee: 27th March 2018

(Chair of management committee)