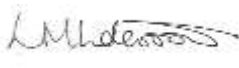


Policy Date:	June 2013	Version: 1.2		
Policy Review Date:	June 2017 June 2020 July 2022 July 2024 August 2026	Mrs Louise Underwood (Head Teacher)		08.06.2020 15.7.2022 24.07.2024
Adopted by Governing Body:				
Chair Of Governors		C Brown		18.07.2022
		Dr E Chester		26.09.2024



Avenue Primary School Whistle Blowing Policy 2024- 26



Why do we have a Whistleblowing Policy?

Employers are recommended to develop a clear and accessible Whistleblowing Policy under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Such a Policy is valuable as, although Schools/Colleges pride themselves on acting with high standards of conduct and providing quality services to the community, sometimes there may be a lapse, or the suspicion of a lapse, in these standards. The simple fact is that an employee may suspect something is going wrong long before anyone else finds out about it: in the worst case, this may not be until an accident has happened or serious damage has been caused.

So if something at work is troubling you enough for you to mention it to your family or friends, please report it straight away. It is natural that you may feel unable to express your concerns out of a feeling of disloyalty, however, such feelings must never result in a potentially illegal or dangerous situation going unreported. This particularly applies where the welfare of children may be at risk: all staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to their school's designated person for child protection - make sure you know their name. Remember, it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted: they need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Don't think "what if I'm wrong?" - think "what if I'm right?"

What is a Whistleblowing Policy?

'Whistleblowing' has been described as "providing a safe alternative to silence" (Public Concern at Work). It is the mechanism for you to voice your concerns without fear of repercussion, even if the concern later proves to be unfounded. When you raise a concern via this route, this is known as making a 'disclosure'.

The Whistleblowing Policy explains how to raise a concern and outlines the protection and support available to you. The existence of this Policy does not in any way lessen your School's commitment to promoting a general climate of openness and co-operation where there is opportunity for discussion about difficulties, concerns and problems with management. Rather

it is there for occasions when you feel unable to raise a concern through this route, or when this would not be appropriate.

The Policy covers and protects employees, agency workers, trainees and contractors' staff. Please take a few minutes to read it: if you have any questions please speak to your Manager/Headteacher or HR Advisor.

The existence of this Policy should be highlighted on a poster in every school staffroom (an example is provided at [Appendix 3](#)). For easy reference, an electronic version of this Policy is available on the Extranet under Human Resources/ HR Model Policies and Procedures.

The Whistleblowing Policy is one of a range of HR Policies and Procedures available to Leicester City Schools. Allegations raised under this Policy may be referred at the appropriate stage for consideration under the appropriate separate procedures.

Whistleblowing generally involves a concern about a danger or illegality that affects others, such as members of the public or your employer. Although on occasion there may be some overlap between a whistleblowing concern and a grievance, for example, a health and safety matter where the risk affects you and others, concerns about a situation affecting you personally should generally be raised via the Grievance Procedure.

What Kind of Disclosures are Covered?

Although this is not an exhaustive list, whistle-blowing disclosures tend to involve one or more of the following:

- Deficiencies in the care, or abuse, of children or young people;
- A criminal act that has been, is being, or is likely to be committed, including damage to the environment, unauthorised use of public funds and possible fraud and/or corruption;
- Someone has failed, is failing, or is likely to fail, to comply with legal obligations;
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public, children/young people and other employees;
- Inappropriate or improper conduct;
- Serious failure to comply with appropriate professional standards;
- Breach of local procedures or statutory codes of practice;
- Other unethical conduct.

Reasons for Whistleblowing:

- We all have an individual responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour;
- We could prevent the problem worsening or widening;
- We may be able to protect or reduce risks to others;
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from Whistleblowing?

- Starting a chain of events which spirals;
- Disrupting the work or project;
- Fear of getting it wrong;
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers;
- Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern:

- You are recommended to approach your Trade Union/Professional Association for advice and support, which may include inviting them to raise the concern on your behalf.
- Approach your immediate manager, Headteacher, or your School's designated person for Child Protection (if the concern is child protection related). If you would feel more comfortable you can ask to meet with them away from the School premises. They will consider whether the issue can be resolved informally.
- You should be making the disclosure in good faith. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 defines 'good faith' in the context of Whistleblowing as "the reasonable belief that the allegation is substantially true and that it is not made for personal gain".
- Voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you can: the earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken. Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- Ideally put your concerns in writing (using the form provided at Appendix 2), outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.
- If your concern is about your immediate manager/Headteacher, or you feel you need to formally raise it with someone outside the school, contact the Local Authority Investigations Team on 2527415 (24 hours) or via email at investigations@leicester.gov.uk. Details of the disclosure will be presented to the 'Monitoring Officer' (or his/her representative) for consideration. The Monitoring Officer will take any necessary urgent action and, taking account of the circumstances and any evidence, determine how to respond to the disclosure (see "What happens next?"). The Monitoring Officer is currently the Service Director for Legal Services.
- If you feel you need to take your concern to a Regulatory body (for example, Ofsted), or to a relevant external organisation/individual (including an elected member/Member of Parliament), please see the contact details at Appendix 4. The conditions for making a disclosure to a Regulatory Body/External Organisation are:
 - You reasonably believe you would suffer detriment if you made the disclosure to your Headteacher, the Local Authority, or to a regulator; or
 - You reasonably believe the evidence is likely to be concealed or destroyed; or
 - You have already made the disclosure to your Headteacher or the Local Authority and you are dissatisfied with the response.
- The Local Authority is actively pursuing the possibility of including in this Policy the provision to place disclosures before a committee of elected members if an individual is dissatisfied with the response from their Headteacher or the Local Authority.
- You are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.
- You may invite your Trade Union/Professional Association representative or a work colleague to be present during any meetings/interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised. Should your Trade Union/Professional Association representative raise the concern on your behalf, they will be automatically afforded the same protection from detriment (see "How are you protected?")

- As far as is within your control, make sure you get a satisfactory response - don't let matters rest.
- Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect you.
- **Be aware that malicious or vexatious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.** The Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) defines 'malicious' as "characterised by malice; intending to do harm" and 'vexatious' as "Law (of an action) brought without sufficient grounds for winning, purely to cause annoyance to the defendant". Such allegations can cause serious difficulties for innocent individuals. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 does not exclude the possibility of workers being sued by individuals for defamation in connection with any disclosures they make.

This process is summarised as a Flowchart at [Appendix 1](#).

What happens next?

- Preliminary inquiries may be made to help decide how best to respond in the public interest. Depending on the nature of the issue raised, the response may be one or more of the following:
 - management investigation;
 - internal audit investigation;
 - disciplinary investigation;
 - referral for consideration under another Council procedure;
 - referral to the police;
 - referral to the District Auditor;
 - an independent investigation;
 - amend procedures;
 - no action due to lack of sufficient evidence.
- You should be given information on how the matter is likely to be dealt with within 10 working days of making the disclosure (so far as legally possible and subject to rights of confidentiality).
- You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and any action that has been taken to resolve the matter (so far as legally possible and subject to rights of confidentiality).
- If you are dissatisfied with the response, you may take the matter further with the Local Authority Investigations Team or the persons/organisations identified at [Appendix 4](#).

How are you protected?

- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from any detriment as a result of making a disclosure in good faith, particularly from disciplinary action, dismissal,

harassment or victimisation. Fulfilling that responsibility includes treating the disclosure confidentially, one aspect of which may involve protecting your identity. Any victimisation or harassment either in an attempt to deter an individual from making a disclosure, or following a disclosure, will be considered gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal.

- No disciplinary action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- If you want your identity to remain confidential, this will be observed as far as possible. Should it not be possible to resolve a concern without revealing your identity (for example, because your evidence is needed in court or in a subsequent internal disciplinary hearing), a discussion will be held with you about whether the matter should be taken forward and, if so, how this will be done and how to best protect your interests.
- Anonymous disclosures will be considered to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable to do so, although the need to confirm or follow up evidence may make this difficult.
- The decision to Whistleblow can be difficult and stressful: advice and support is available from your line manager/Headteacher and/or your Trade Union/Professional Association. In addition, support is available from the Local Authority's Counselling Service Provider.
- It is your right to remain in your current post. Your employer (usually the Local Authority) will work with school management to make every possible effort to ensure that this takes place. If you feel unable to remain in your role during the investigation, every effort will be made to transfer you to an appropriate alternative.

What is the Local Authority Monitoring Officer Responsible for?

The Monitoring Officer will be responsible for:

- Confirming representatives who will be responsible for actions as outlined in this Policy
- Ensuring records of all disclosures are made and their outcomes recorded and reporting as appropriate and necessary to relevant Directors, the Directors Board and Members.

How will this Policy be Reviewed?

This Policy will be reviewed for fitness for purpose after each Whistleblowing case. This review will take place with the involvement of the appropriate Trade Unions and Professional Associations.

Where can I go for further advice?

Your Trade Union/Professional Association. In addition, the independent charity Public Concern at Work (PCaW) provides advice to individuals on whistleblowing in the public interest on a strictly confidential basis (www.pcaw.co.uk / 020 7404 6609).

"Absolutely without fail challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong" - "Sounding the Alarm" – Barnardos

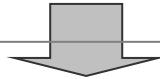
APPENDIX 1 - THE WHISTLEBLOWING PROCESS

Stage 1- Making a disclosure

Approach your Manager, Headteacher, designated person for Child Protection or the Local Authority Investigations Team and share your concerns. You can do this verbally or in writing.

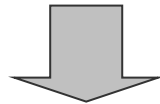
You may be asked to consider making a written or verbal statement. In such cases, a brief summary of the interview will be made and agreed by both parties.

Please see the Whistleblowing Policy for details of further contacts should you feel unable to discuss your concerns with the above parties (or feel that the response from these parties is insufficient)



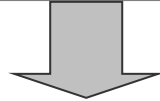
Stage 2 – Initial Response to the Disclosure

Consideration will be given as to what action will be taken as a result of the disclosure. You will be notified of the intended response and the reasons for it.



Stage 3 – Launch a Management Investigation

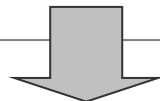
Where a Management Investigation is deemed necessary, a senior manager will be appointed as an investigating officer.



Stage 4 – Deciding whether further action is necessary

On the strength of the information provided by the investigation, further action may be necessary:

- If there is a case to be answered by any individual, the recognised procedure will be followed;
- Where there is no case to answer, but the concern was raised in good faith and in accordance with the Whistleblowing policy, the school will ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that you suffer no reprisals or victimisation;
- Where it is established that the allegations were malicious/vexatious or you have not acted in accordance with the Whistleblowing policy, disciplinary action may be taken.



Stage 5 - Confirmation of the Outcome

You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and any appropriate action taken to resolve the matter, subject to any confidentiality clause and/or legal constraints. If you are dissatisfied with this response you may take the matter further with the prescribed persons or organisations identified in the Whistleblowing Policy.

APPENDIX 2 - WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY - REPORTING FORM

Referral Form to be completed by Individual identifying a concern under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

DETAILS OF PERSON RAISING CONCERNS AND ISSUE RAISED

Nature of Concern:

Background (please provide dates where possible) :

Who is involved?

Reasons for the concern:

Name :

Date (dd/mm/yy) : / /

Contact No.

Time (mm:hh) : :

Meeting Date (dd/mm/yy): / / Time (mm:hh): :

INVESTIGATION OF CONCERN

Concern Received By:	Investigations Audit Team :
	HR :

Action :	
Signature:.....	Time: (mm:hh): :

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Comments/Additional information:

Silence isn't always golden...

Although we all pride ourselves on having high standards of conduct and providing quality services to the community, sometimes you may become aware of a lapse, or suspected lapse, in these standards.

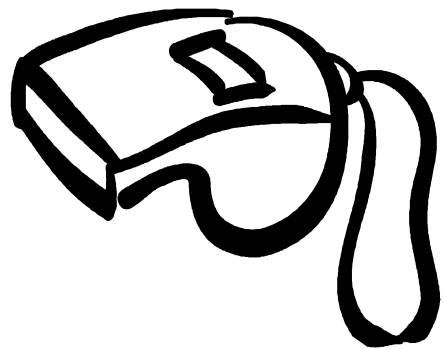
The simple fact is that you may suspect something is going wrong long before anyone else finds out about it.

So if something at work is troubling you enough for you to mention it to your family or friends, please report it straight away.

The Whistleblowing Policy is available from Human Resources or on the Extranet under Human Resources / HR Model Policies and Procedures.

Your Trade Union/Professional Association is available to provide you with advice and support.

Don't think "what if I'm wrong?" - think "what if I'm right?"



APPENDIX 4 - LIST OF PRESCRIBED PERSONS FOR EXTERNAL PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES

Ofsted

Can deal with referrals re: concerns about any service for children and young people.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Tel: 08456 014772 (08.00 to 18.00)

Audit Commission for England/Wales (inc. auditors appointed by the Commission)

Can deal with referrals re: the proper conduct of public business, value for money, fraud and corruption in local government and the health service.

1 Vincent Square
London
SW1P 2PN

Tel: 020 7630 1019 / Audit Commission Public Interest Disclosure
Hotline: 020 74046609

Charity Commissioners for England and Wales

Can deal with referrals re: the proper administration of charities, or funds given or held for charitable purposes.

Head of Operations
2nd Floor 20 Kings Parade
Queens Dock
Liverpool
L3 4DQ

Tel: 0870 3330123 Fax: 0151 703 1556

Her Majesty's Commissioners of Customs and Excise

Can deal with referrals re: Value Added Tax, insurance premium tax, excise duties and landfill tax. The import and export of prohibited or restricted goods.

HM Customs and Excise
Customs Confidential
Freepost
SEA 9391 PO Box 100
Gravesend
Kent

DA12 2BR

Tel: 0800 595000/Email: customs.confidential@hmce.gov.uk

The Certification Officer

Can deal with referrals re: fraud, and other irregularities relating to the financial affairs of trade unions and employers' associations.

Brandon House 180 Borough High Street
London
SE1 1LW

Tel: 020 7210 3734/3735 Fax: 020 7210 3612

Her Majesty's Commissioners of the Inland Revenue

Can deal with referrals re: Income Tax, Corporation Tax, Capital Gains Tax, Petroleum Revenue Tax, Inheritance Tax, Stamp Duties, National Insurance Contributions, Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Sick Pay, Tax Credits, Child Benefits, Collection of Student Loans and the enforcement of the National Minimum Wage.

Inland Revenue
West Wing
Somerset House
London WC2 1LB

Comptroller and Auditor General of the National Audit Office

Can deal with referrals re: the proper conduct of public business, value for money, fraud and corruption in relation to the provision of centrally funded public services

The Comptroller and Auditor
General National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
Victoria
London
SW1W 9SP

Tel: 020 7798 7999

Director General of Electricity Supply

Can deal with referrals re: the generation, transmission, distribution and supply of electricity and activities ancillary to these matters.

Office of Electricity Regulation
Hagley House
Hagley Road
Birmingham
B16 8QG

Tel: 0121 456 2100 Fax: 0121 4564664.

Director General of Gas Supply

Deals with referrals re: the transportation, shipping and supply of gas through pipes and activities ancillary to these matters.

Office of Gas Supply
Stockley House
130 Wilton Road
London
SW1V 1LQ

Tel: 020 7828 0898 Fax: 020 7932 1600

Director General of Telecommunications

Can deal with referrals re: provision/use of telecommunication systems/services & apparatus.

Office of Telecommunications
50 Ludgate Hill
London
EC4M 7JJ

Tel: 020 7634 8700 Fax: 020 7634 8845

Director General of Water Services

Can deal with referrals re: the supply of water and the provision of sewerage services.

Office of Water Services Centre
City Tower 7 Hill Street
Birmingham
B5 4UA

Tel: 0121 625 1300 Fax: 0121 625 1400

Serious Fraud Office

Can deal with referrals re: serious or complex fraud.

The Director of the Serious Fraud Office
Elm House 10-16 Elm Street
London
WC1X 0BJ

Tel: 020 7239 7272 Fax: 020 7837 1689

The Environment Agency

Can deal with referrals re: acts/omissions which have an actual or potential effect on the environment or the management or regulation of the environment, including pollution, abstraction of water, flooding, the flow of rivers, inland fisheries and migratory salmon or trout.

Rio House Waterside Drive Aztec West
Almondsbury
Bristol
BS12 4UD

Tel: 0800 807060 (24 hour line) Fax: 01454 624409

Food Standards Agency

Can deal with referrals re: matters which may affect the health of any member of the public in relation to the consumption of food and other matters concerning the protection of the interests of consumers in relation to food

Personnel and Establishments Division
Food Standards Agency
Room 111C Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6NH

Tel: 020 7276 8120 Fax: 020 7276 8132

Financial Services Authority (FSA)

Can deal with referrals re: The carrying on of investment or insurance business, the operation of: banks and building societies, deposit-taking businesses, wholesale money market regimes, friendly societies, benevolent societies, working men's clubs, specially authorised societies and industrial and provident societies, the functioning of financial markets, investment exchanges and clearing houses. Money laundering, financial crime, and other serious financial misconduct in connection with activities regulated by the FSA.

25 The North Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 5HS

Tel: 020 7676 4646 / Email: whistle@fsa.gov.uk

General Social Care Council (GSCC)

Can deal with referrals re: matters relating to the registration of social care workers under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Goldings House
2 Hays Lane
London
SE1 2HB

Tel: 020 7397 5100 / Website: www.gsccl.org.uk

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Can deal with referrals re: matters which may affect the health or safety of any individual at work; matters which may affect the health and safety of any member of the public arising out of, or in connection with, the activities of persons at work

Health and Safety Executive Information Centre
Broad Lane
Sheffield
S3 7HQ

Tel: 0541 545500 (HSE infoline) Fax: 0114 289 2333

Housing Corporation

Can deal with referrals re: registration and operation of registered social landlords, including their administration of public and private funds and management of their housing stock.

Assistant Director Supervision
Housing Corporation
149 Tottenham Court Road
London
W1T 7BN

Tel: 020 7393 2000

Information Commissioner

Can deal with referrals re: compliance with the requirements of legislation relating to data protection and freedom of information*

(*Data protection legislation regulates the processing of information relating to individuals, including the obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information)

(*Freedom of information legislation provides for the disclosure by public authorities of the information that they hold)

The Office of the Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545700 / Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Leicestershire Constabulary

Can deal with referrals re: information about any crime.

Force Headquarters

St Johns

Enderby

Leicester

LE19 2BX

Tel: 0116 222 2222

Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)

Can deal with referrals re: matters relating to the provision of regulated care services, as defined in the Care Standards Act 2000

The Customer Service Manager

Commission for Social Care Inspection

St Nicholas Building

St Nicholas Street

Newcastle

NE1 1NB

Tel: 0191 233 3556 / Email: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

The Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority

Can deal with referrals re: matters relating to occupational pension schemes and other private pension arrangements.

Invicta House

Trafalgar Place

Brighton

BN1 4DW

Tel: 01273 627600 / E-mail: helpdesk@opra.gov.uk

Office of Fair Trading

Can deal with referrals re: matters concerning the sale of goods or the supply of services, which adversely affect the interests of consumers or competition affecting markets in the UK.

Fleetbank House

2-6 Salisbury Square

London

EC4Y 8JX

Tel: 020 7211 8000 Fax: 020 7211 8800

Standards Board for England

Can deal with referrals re: breaches by a member/co-opted member of relevant authority (as defined in section 49(6) of the Local Government Act 2000) of that authority's code of conduct

1st Floor Cottons Centre

Cottons Lane

London SE1 2QL

Tel: 0845 078 8181.