



Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School

Whistleblowing Policy

Date adopted	March 2017	Notes
Last Reviewed	February, 2017	
Review Cycle	As required	
Review by	Headteacher	

Whistle Blowing Policy

1. Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and ethics in all its activities. School employees are encouraged to bring to the Head Teacher's attention any misconduct, suspected misconduct, malpractice, illegal acts or child protection issues. In the case of whistleblowing where the subject is the Head Teacher, staff should contact the Chair of Governors.
2. The Whistleblowing policy has been developed so that staff will know how to raise concerns in the right way at an early stage, and that managers understand their responsibilities in relation to allegations of misconduct and impropriety.
3. The School is committed to being open, honest and accountable and therefore wishes to be alerted to any problems at the earliest opportunity. This will enable the School to take action, as appropriate to:
 - a. pre-empt crime or other wrong doings, where possible
 - b. where a crime or something suspicious has taken place, to instigate an appropriate investigation
 - c. bring to account the perpetrators
 - d. minimise and contain any adverse impact
 - e. take corrective action to eliminate or significantly reduce the scope for repeat occurrences.

4. Types of Action Covered by the Policy

- a. Concerns about the following types of wrongdoings are covered by the School's whistle blowing policy:
- b. Corruption
- c. Fraud (including unauthorised use of school/COL money, for example)
- d. Theft
- e. Mistreatment of clients, particularly children and vulnerable adults in our care
- f. An unlawful act
- g. Any danger to health and safety
- h. A person abusing their position in connection with unauthorised activity for personal gain
- i. Damage being caused to the environment (by pollution for example)
- j. Misuse of School property.

5. Confidential Reporting Procedure

6. Any suspicion of fraud or other wrongdoing will be treated seriously and will be reviewed and analysed in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act, the Human Rights Act and the Corporation's Fraud Investigation Plan.
7. All those who work at our school should be aware that they have statutory protection against victimisation and dismissal under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1999, if they speak out genuinely against corruption and malpractice at work.

8. It is essential for all concerned that disclosures of wrongdoing or irregularity are dealt with properly, quickly and discreetly. This is in the interests of the School, its employees, any persons who are the subject of such allegations, as well as the person making the disclosure.
9. Confidential reporting is the disclosure or communication of information about possible malpractice by individuals or organisations, either internally or externally, to an organisation, in this case, the School.
10. The School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the School's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
11. This procedure statement makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage and is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the School rather than ignoring a problem or 'blowing the whistle' to external sources.
12. The procedure applies to all employees, members of the public, building contractors and those contractors working for the School / Corporation on its premises, for example, agency staff, cleaners and caterers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the School in their own premises.
13. This procedure is in addition to the School's / Corporation's financial irregularities procedure, grievance procedure and other statutory reporting procedures applying to some departments.

14. Aims

The procedure aims to:

- a. encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice.
 - b. provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
 - c. ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.
 - d. reassure you that you will be protected from possible disadvantage if you have a reasonable belief and that you have made any disclosure in good faith.
15. The Confidential Reporting Procedure is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. Such concerns include:
- a. conduct which is an offence or a breach of law, including failure to comply with a legal obligation
 - b. disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
 - c. health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees

d. damage to the environment

16. Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees and volunteers of the school or others acting on behalf of the school can be reported under the Confidential Reporting Procedure.

17. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

18. Anonymous Allegations

19. This procedure encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.

20. Where a member of staff chooses to report their concerns anonymously, such anonymity will be respected. However, it should be noted that concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful and will only be considered at the discretion of the School.

21. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- a. the seriousness of the issues raised
- b. the credibility of the concern; and
- c. the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

22. It should be noted that, if the report suggests criminal activity, and the case is to be pursued by police, the identity of the person reporting the details may be important at a later date if criminal proceedings are to be pursued effectively; identification is preferred and will assist the investigation.

23. Untrue Allegations

24. If you make an allegation in good faith and you have a reasonable belief in the truth of the allegation but it is not confirmed by the investigation, there will be no recrimination against you.

25. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, in bad faith, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

26. How to Raise a Concern

27. As a first step by an employee, you should normally raise concerns with a member of the leadership team. If the concern involves a member of the leadership team, contact the head teacher. If the concern is about the head teacher contact the chair of governors.

28. Employees, members of the public and contractors may raise their concerns orally or in writing, by letter or email. You should include:

- a. the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
- b. the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation

29. The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take definitive action. Although you are not expected to prove beyond reasonable doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.
30. You may invite your trade union or a work colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

31. What Not to Do

32. You must not do any of the following:
- a. contact the suspected perpetrator in an effort to determine facts or demand restitution.
 - b. discuss the case facts, suspicions, or allegations with anyone outside the School / Corporation (including the Press) unless specifically asked to do so by the Chair of Governors.
 - c. discuss the case with anyone within the School / Corporation other than the people listed above.
 - d. Attempt to personally conduct investigations or interviews or question anyone unless asked to do so by the Head teacher or Chair of Governors

33. How the School will respond

34. The School will respond to your concerns, and where appropriate, the matters raised may:
- a. be investigated by management, internal audit, or through the disciplinary process.
 - b. be referred to the police
 - c. be referred to the external auditor
 - d. form the subject of an independent inquiry
35. In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle which the School will have in mind is the public interest. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
36. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
37. Within ten working days of a concern being raised you will be contacted. This may be the Head teacher, The Chair of Governors or an officer from the Corporation:
- a. acknowledging that the concern has been received
 - b. indicating how we propose to deal with the matter
 - c. giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
 - d. telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made

- e. supplying you with information on employee support mechanisms, and
- f. telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

38. The amount of contact between the officers considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the School will seek further information from you.

39. The School accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, we will inform you of the outcome of any investigation.

40. Confidential Advice

41. This procedure is intended to provide you with an avenue within the School to raise concerns. The School hopes you will be satisfied with any action taken.

42. Employees are encouraged to raise "whistleblowing" concerns in the first instance via this policy rather than going straight to external agencies. Reporting concerns to, e.g., the press, may seriously undermine any investigation into the issues of concern.

43. Advice can be obtained from a trade union representative or "Public Concern at Work" (phone 020 7404 6609; web: www.pcaw.co.uk), an independent charity which gives advice on how to raise concerns about serious malpractice at work.

44. You can also get advice from Central Government on www.gov.uk/whistleblowing