



Surrey County Council
Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Linkfield Lane
Redhill, Surrey RH1 1DU
Telephone: 01737 765373
Fax: 01737 768557
Email: secretary@stjosephs-redhill.surrey.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs T Lawlor

Whistleblowing Policy

Governors' Committee Responsible:	Resources
Governor Lead:	Mr P McCallum
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	Headteacher
Status & Review Cycle:	Autumn 2016
Next Review Date:	Autumn 2019

Introduction

St Joseph's is a voluntary aided Catholic School where parents, school and parish work together to deepen the children's awareness of their faith and to provide a challenging fulfilling education. The school is a mixed primary catering for the whole range of primary ages. From 2016, the school has gradually expanded to a three form entry in EYFS and KS1 with classes of mixed ability throughout the school. The school will continue to expand annually.

St Joseph's School is committed to the highest possible standards of honesty, openness, probity and accountability. It seeks to conduct its affairs in a responsible manner, to ensure that all Council activities are open and effectively managed, and that the school's integrity and principles of public interest disclosure are sustained.

In line with that commitment we encourage employees, those working on behalf of the school 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 as follows:

- a) with their immediate manager and/or more senior managers. Where any member of staff decides to report a serious incident, whether anonymous or not, this will be treated as a 'protected, internal disclosure' ie there will be no adverse repercussions for the member of staff.

b) if for any reason a member of staff feels unable to report a situation through our current provider, they may wish to use [Public Concern at Work](#). This helpline offers independent and confidential advice to workers who are unsure whether or how to raise a public interest concern. Tel: 020 7404 6609.

c) NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline – 0800 028 0285

Purpose of the policy

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the school. However, staff may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the school. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. Each person working for St Joseph's School needs to realise that they not only have the right, but also a duty to report any improper actions or omissions.

St Joseph's School also recognises and appreciates that staff who raise concerns regarding malpractice or wrongdoing are an asset to the school, and not a threat. This policy makes it clear that they can raise concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The whistle blowing policy is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise serious concerns within the school.

This policy aims to:

- encourage staff to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice

- provide avenues to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken

- ensure that staff receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied

- reassure staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosure in good faith.

Who is covered by the policy?

The policy applies to all staff whether full-time or part time, permanent or temporary; members of the school and those carrying out work for the school, for example, agency workers, contractors, consultants. It also covers providers of works, services and supplies, including the school's external contractors. However, to facilitate the reading of this policy, the terms 'staff' or 'members of staff' have been used, with the intention to cover all individuals mentioned above.

Scope of the policy

There are existing procedures in place to enable employees to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment. The whistle blowing policy is intended to cover serious concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures, in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees/staff
Damage to the environment
- Information relating to the above issues that has been or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

Examples of the above categories are likely to include:

- The unauthorised use or misuse of public funds
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual, physical or psychological abuse
- Harassment & bullying of staff
- Breaches of codes of conduct.

Therefore, any serious concerns that a member of staff has about any aspect of practice or the conduct of St Joseph's School staff or Members of the school, others acting on behalf of the school, can be reported under the whistle blowing policy where the member of staff has a reasonable belief in those concerns and they relate to one of the specified areas set out above. All staff have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns they have.

Links with other policies

This policy has links to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct and the School's Financial Procedures Policy.

This policy does not replace the school complaints procedures. Other forms of concern or complaint are dealt with under separate policies, such as Disciplinary (inappropriate conduct or behaviour) and Capability (performance related issues). Senior managers are responsible for making staff aware of the existence of these procedures.

Safeguarding against harassment or victimisation

The school is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees. It is recognised that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If a member of staff has a reasonable belief that what they are saying is true, they have nothing to fear because they will be doing their duty to their employer and/or those for whom they are providing a service.

The school will take a zero tolerance approach to any act of harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures). The school will take appropriate action to protect staff when they raise a concern, by supporting the member of staff and consider action under the appropriate procedure (for example Disciplinary) against the person or persons responsible for the reported acts, provided the member of staff:

- Discloses the information in good faith
- Believes the concern to be true
- Does not act maliciously or make false allegations
- Does not seek any personal gain.

and provided the allegations relate to one of the categories covered by the scope of the policy and referred to above.

There are national guidelines to help you as a whistleblower. [Here is a link to further information on the protection of complainants disclosing information to the Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\).](#)

Unsubstantiated allegations

If a member of staff makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, an allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence but at the appropriate time, the whistle blower may be asked to come forward as a witness, and this will be discussed with them.

Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages staff to put their name to their allegation whenever possible.

The school will take all concerns raised seriously. However, concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the school. In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

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

How to raise concerns

There are three ways in which to raise a concern (making it more balanced between reporting internally or externally):

1. Staff may raise concerns with their immediate manager or another manager or, if it is believed that such managers are involved, the Headteacher or Chair of Governor.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are asked to provide the background and history of the concern (including relevant dates) and the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation.

The earlier the concern is expressed, the easier it is to take action. In order to assist with the investigation, staff should provide as much detail and supporting evidence as possible. Staff are not expected to prove that an allegation is true, only to have sufficient grounds for concern.

The whistle blower may invite a recognised Trade Union representative or a work colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns raised.

2. An option for staff who wish to raise concerns is to contact the Public Concern at Work helpline on 020 7404 6609. This helpline offers independent and confidential advice to workers who are unsure whether or how to raise a public interest concern.

How the school will respond

The school will investigate and respond to all concerns raised by staff, parents or children.

While it is not essential that the concerns be provided in writing, the person receiving the concern will, however, ensure that a written account of it is made. This will help with the subsequent investigation by making sure that everyone involved is clear about what is being raised.

When a concern is raised, managers should undertake the following actions:

- Take the concern seriously
 - Consider the concerns fully and objectively
 - Recognise that raising a concern can be a difficult experience for employees
- Ensure confidentiality
- Refer to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, to agree the level at which the concern will be investigated and identify the Senior Leader with overall responsibility for co-ordinating the matter.

Staff members who are under investigation will not be involved in the investigation process.

Initial enquiry

In order to protect the 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

that of the public interest. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

Purpose of the initial inquiry is to ascertain if the conduct or behaviour involves a Member of the school, a senior manager or a member of staff, so that further enquiries and investigation can be progressed accordingly.

Preliminary enquiry

Preliminary enquiry establishes need to carry out an investigation. Further to the results of the initial and preliminary enquiries, and at the discretion of senior management, the following steps will then need to be considered:

- Concerns or allegations, which fall within the scope of specific procedures, eg child protection or discrimination issues, will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures

- Where there is any financial impropriety, the concern should be referred to Internal Audit, before taking any other action

- Inform the LADO if the concerns indicate unlawful activity.

- Ensure that matters of a criminal nature are reported to the Police, after consultation with Internal Audit

- Whether the disciplinary or other relevant management policies, procedures and processes of the school need to be applied

- Appointment of an officer to carry out the investigation under these procedures.

Investigation

Depending on the nature of concerns, investigation may be carried out under Ending Bullying & Harassment Policy, Capability Policy, Disciplinary Policy or the Strategy against Fraud & Corruption.

Investigation Timescales

Within 10 working days of a concern being raised, the person who is dealing with the concern that has been raised will respond in writing either to the employee directly:

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received

- Indicating how the school propose to deal with the matter

 - Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response

 - Advising whether any initial enquiries have been made

 - Supplying information on staff support mechanisms

 - Advising whether further investigations or action is required and, if not, why not.

Investigation process

The impartial investigating manager appointed to undertake the investigation would establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and

can be resolved internally. Other people may need to be interviewed to provide further information and/or clarification concerning the issue(s) raised.

It is essential that written records of all interviews be kept throughout the investigation, together with written details of any action taken. The investigation will result in a written report and recommendations for corrective action which will be passed to the manager responsible for deciding whether formal action shall be taken.

Where any meeting is arranged involving an individual member of staff, which can be off-site, a recognised Trade Union representative or a work colleague may also attend. The school will take steps to minimise any difficulties which may be experienced as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if a member of staff is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the school will arrange for them to receive appropriate procedural and/or legal advice.

The member of staff raising the concern with a manager will be, subject to legal constraints, advised in writing of the outcome of the investigation and, where appropriate, what action is being taken. This may include changes to working practices to ensure that a similar situation does not occur again.

Monitoring arrangements

The Head has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. The Head maintains a record of concerns raised and the outcomes (but in a form which does not compromise confidentiality) as part of the already existing major case register, and will report as necessary to the school.

The Financial regulations state that the Headteacher will ensure that whistle blowing procedures are defined, documented, widely circulated and reviewed at appropriate intervals, in consultation with the Governing Body. Whistleblowing complaints will be reported to the Full Governing Body Meeting on a termly basis.

The practical aspects of monitoring are to assess whether:

The policy is being used appropriately

Concerns are being handled and investigated properly

There are any discernible patterns of concern across the school

The policy has been effective in identifying and deterring malpractice, and More needs to be done to raise awareness of the policy.