

Ringway Primary School Whistle Blowing Policy

The Future starts here!

Our aim is to provide the foundations for a positive future for our pupils.

A future where pupils learn to stay safe, to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle , and to enjoy all they do.

A future where they are money smart & make a positive & respectful contribution to their culturally diverse community - at a local, national & global level.

A future where they aspire to be the best they can be & achieve their full potential.

Created.....Oct 16.....

Reviewed.....Oct 17.....

Signed C of Gov.....

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

RINGWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL 2016

Scope of the Whistle Blowing Policy

1. The following Section is drafted to enable Governing Bodies to know how to respond to Whistle blowing allegations and what actions should be taken in response. The Guidance is primarily concerned with allegations made by employees (not least to address the potential of the City Council breaching requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act).
2. However, the principles outlined in these procedures and guidance, as far as they can be, should also be applied to Whistle blowing allegations received from sources other than employees of the City Council. In these cases, particular consideration needs to be given to matters of confidentiality.
3. Existing internal procedures enable employees and others to lodge various concerns and these should normally be followed without recourse to the Whistle blowing arrangements. These concerns cover e.g.:
 - Grievances relating to employees conditions of employment;
 - Harassment;
 - Complaints relating to service delivery; etc
 - However, these matters can be raised if there are concerns that the appropriate procedures may be subverted or not pursued diligently.
4. The Whistle blowing Policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of these existing procedures and is aimed at addressing areas relating to possible malpractice or wrongdoing.
5. The section on Anti Fraud and Corruption has outlined specific arrangements for dealing with suspected financial irregularities. The wider aspects of malpractice and wrongdoing which may be raised under the provisions of the Whistle blowing Policy include:-
 - Any unlawful act, whether criminal or a breach of civil law;
 - Waste, abuse or misuse of the School's resources;
 - Breach of the City Council's Code of Conduct for Employees;
 - Breach of the School's Scheme of Delegation;
 - Breach of Schools Financial Regulations;
 - The health and safety of any individual has been, or is likely to be, endangered;
 - The environment has been, is being or is likely to be, damaged (as a result of the School's actions or inaction's)
6. Information about any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to be, deliberately concealed.
7. Governing Bodies should investigate those matters that fall clearly within their area of operational responsibility or should formally refer the matter to the City Treasurer. In all cases the responsibility for investigating the allegation quickly should be accepted.

Safeguards

8. In order to ensure that allegations are investigated in the right spirit with the right outcome, the the following safeguards or principles should be applied.

Harassment or victimisation

The Governing Body acknowledges that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult decision for an employee to take, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. The Governing Body will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect any person who raises a concern in good faith.

9. Governing Bodies should monitor how employees are subsequently treated after raising a

matter of concern and should ensure that if they find evidence of harassment or victimisation, this is dealt with under disciplinary arrangements.

Confidentiality

10. The Governing Body will do everything possible to protect an employee's identity when a concern is raised and the individual does not want their name disclosed. It must be appreciated, however, that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement may be required as part of the evidence.

Anonymous allegations

11. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less persuasive than when an employee is prepared to come forward formally. Nevertheless, anonymous allegations may be considered at the discretion of the Governing Body depending upon;
 - The seriousness of the issue raised;
 - The credibility of the concern; and
 - The likelihood of confirming the allegations from attributable sources.

False and malicious allegations

12. While encouraging employees to bring forward matters of concern, the Governing Body must guard against bogus claims (not least because the cost of investigation is high) but also claims made to deliberately damage the reputation of other employees of the City Council as a whole.
13. Consequently if an employee makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be considered or taken. However, if an employee makes false, malicious or vexatious allegations this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and disciplinary action will be taken – the Public Interest and Disclosure Act only offers protection to the individual if the disclosure is made in good faith.

How to Raise a concern

14. The earlier an employee expresses a concern, the easier it will be to take action.
15. Employees should normally raise their concerns with their immediate line manager. However, the most appropriate person to contact to report a concern will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice.
16. For example, if an employee believes that their manager is involved in the matter of concern any of the following may be contacted:-
 - The Chair of Governors
 - The Chief Operating Officer – Children's Services
 - The City Treasurer
 - The Chief Executive
 - Internal Audit
 - Fraud Investigation Group
17. Wherever possible, concerns should be expressed in writing, setting out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why the employee is particularly concerned about the situation.
18. However, if an employee does not feel able to put the concern in writing, he or she should be allowed to telephone or meet the appropriate officer.
19. Although an employee is expected to prove the truth of an allegation, he or she will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for a concern to be raised and to enable the matter to be taken forward.
20. Employees may wish to invite their Trade Union to raise a matter on their behalf.

NB Should the concern we about the handling of a child protection issue in school you can call the NSPCC hotline for help 08000280285

How the matter will be investigated

21. Allegations should be handled confidentially and discreetly by those managers who are directly involved in the investigating process.
22. Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. As outlined above, concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example disciplinary procedures) should normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
23. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action, once the employee's concerns have been explained, without the need for investigation. In these cases confirmation should be sought from the employee that they are satisfied that the matter is resolved but they should be invited to raise the matter again if the agreed actions do not resolve the problem.
24. An employee expressing a concern should receive a formal acknowledgement within 10 working days of the concern being received. This acknowledgement will indicate:-
 - How the Governing Body proposes to deal with the matter
 - An estimate of how long it will take to provide a response
 - Any initial enquiries that may have been made
 - Whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not
25. If necessary, further information will be sought from the employee. This will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved in conducting an investigation and the clarity of the information provided.
26. At any meeting arranged to discuss an employee's concerns the employee has the right, if they so wish, to be accompanied by their Trade Union representative or a friend who is not involved in the area to which the concern relates.
27. The Governing Body will take steps to minimise any difficulties that an employee may experience as a result of raising a concern. For example an employee is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Governing Body will ensure that appropriate advice be provided to the employee about the procedures in terms of what will happen and what will be expected of them.
28. In order to assure the employee that the matter has been properly addressed the employee will receive information, subject to legal constraints, about the outcomes of any investigations.

Monitoring Awareness and Training

29. The City Treasurer and the Chief Executive will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the procedures outlined in this Guidance Note and for amending the procedures as necessary. Governing Bodies are responsible for ensuring that all members of their staff are aware of the procedures and that any training needs are addressed (in consultation with the City Treasurer or Chief Executive if necessary) which may arise from the application of the procedures.
30. Raising awareness of the Whistle blowing Policy should form part of the induction training for all employees.
31. Governing Bodies should maintain a confidential central record of all Whistle blowing allegations that have been raised and the responses provided. In respect of anonymous allegations, should the Governing Body consider that further action would be inappropriate (see paragraph 11 of this appendix), details of the allegation and reason for the decision must still be recorded. These central records will be used to analyse the impact and effectiveness of the arrangements put in place as part of the process of reporting on the effectiveness and outcomes of the Policy and as a record of actions taken in the case of any matters raised

under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

How the matter can be taken further

32. It is intended that the Whistle blowing Policy and these procedures will enable Governing Bodies to satisfactorily deal with concerns raised by employees. If an employee is not satisfied, and feels it appropriate to take the issue further, the employee may make a protected disclosure to a third party, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. There is an independent charity "Public Concern at Work" (telephone 0171 404 6609) which provides free advice to employees wishing to express concerns about fraud or other serious malpractices.
33. The Governing Body should make every effort to ensure that a satisfactory conclusion is reached to minimise the cases where the employee feels they must resort to these measures. Ultimately, however, the City Council does not wish to inhibit the effective investigation of any matters of concern that have been raised in the public interest.