

## Whistle Blowing Policy

Date agreed by Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

Review date: \_\_\_\_\_

Governor signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### General Introduction:

This policy supports the work of the school in promoting its mission statement, aims and values.

### Mission statement:

St Michael's CE Primary School endeavours to provide a happy, safe, caring and stimulating learning environment, based on Christian principles in which all members of the school community are valued as individuals and are encouraged to reach their full potential.

### School aims:

At St Michael's we value every member of our school community and our aims are for every child, whatever their background or circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Develop their understanding of the value of leading a healthy lifestyle
- Work and play in a secure and safe environment in which they are encouraged to develop moral values and mutual respect
- Experience an exciting curriculum which fosters their enthusiasm, develops an enquiring mind and enables every child to achieve his/her full potential
- Access an education for life where they are able to learn how to become effective and reliable members of the wider community
- Foster ambition and expectation to carry through to adult life

To achieve these aims all learners, staff, parents and governors will work together to promote our **core values** of peace, courage and respect.



### **Scope of Policy**

This policy is designed to enable employees or other members of the School to raise concerns or disclose information at a higher level which the individual believes shows malpractice.

A number of policies and procedures are already in place including grievance, discipline, complaints and guidelines for dealing with harassment. This policy is intended to cover concerns which are in the public interest and may (at least initially) be investigated separately but might then lead to the using of such procedures. These might include:

- Any unlawful act, whether criminal or a breach of civil law.
- Maladministration, as defined by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- Breach of any statutory Code of Practice.
- Breach of, or failure to implement or comply with Financial Regulations or Standing Orders.
- Any failure to comply with appropriate professional standards.
- Fraud, corruption or dishonesty.
- Actions which are likely to cause physical danger to any person, or to give rise to a risk of significant damage to property.
- Loss of income to the school.
- Abuse of power, or the use of the school's powers and authority for any unauthorised or ulterior purpose.
- Discrimination in employment or the provision of education.
- Any other matter you consider you cannot raise by any other procedure.

### **Purpose**

Our school is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, the school encourages employees with serious concerns about the school's work to come forward and voice those concerns. This also applies to concerns about the activities of staff, Governors and external organisations in their dealings with the school.

Members of staff may be the first to spot anything that is seriously wrong within the school. However, they might not say anything because they think this would be disloyal, or they might be worried that their suspicions are not justified. They may also be worried that they or someone else may be victimised. Other stakeholders (for example, parents of students) may also share some of these concerns.

We are committed to being open, honest and accountable and this policy aims to make sure that if you want to raise any concern, you can do so with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

### **What types of action are covered by the policy?**



The policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as the following.

- Fraud and corruption
- Children or students being mistreated
- Unauthorised use of public money
- An unlawful act
- Any danger to health and safety
- The environment being damaged (for example, by pollution)
- A person abusing their position or any unauthorised use of their position for personal gain
- A person deliberately not keeping to a Council policy, an official code of practice, any law or regulation, or any procedures agreed by the local authority or governing body
- A person failing to meet appropriate professional standards
- A person being discriminated against because of their race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, sex, sexuality, class or home life

**To whom does this policy apply?**

This policy applies to all staff working in school as well as contractors working on school premises (for example, agency staff, builders). It also covers suppliers and people who provide services to the school.

These procedures build upon our complaints procedure and other reporting procedures applying to various departments. Head teachers and other senior managers are responsible for making all relevant people aware of these procedures.

**What is not covered?**

- Staff's complaints about their employment. These complaints are dealt with through our Grievance Procedure.
- Complaints about our services. These complaints are dealt with through our Complaints Procedure.

**Protecting you**

If your allegation is true, you have nothing to fear, but we understand that deciding to blow the whistle is not easy. If you raise a concern which you believe is true, we will take appropriate action under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 to protect you from any harassment, victimisation or bullying.

We will keep your concerns confidential if this is what you want. In this case we will not reveal your name or position without your permission or unless we have to do so by law. We would explain this at the time you raise a concern so you can decide whether or not to proceed.

If you work for the Council, you should also know that any allegation you make will not influence, or be influenced by, any unrelated disciplinary action against you or any redundancy procedures that may affect you.

**Anonymous allegations**



Because we will protect you (as explained above), we encourage you to give your name when you make an allegation. Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective and if, for example, we do not have enough information, we may not be able to investigate the matter at all.

### **Unfounded allegations**

The school recognises the importance of taking all allegations seriously and the requirement under Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 Part 4 'Allegations of Abuse made against teachers and other staff' to consider unfounded allegations.

### **How to raise a concern**

You should first raise your concern, in writing, with the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors in the case of concerns about the Head Teacher as stated in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 Part 4 'Allegations of Abuse made against teachers and other staff'. If the relevant manager cannot deal with the matter, he or she will refer the concern to the School's HR provider..

You can also raise your concerns in the following ways.

- By writing to the Employee Relations provider:
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### **Help for you**

You may want to discuss your concern with a friend or colleague. You may then find it easier to raise a concern if others share the same experiences or concerns.

If you work for the Council, your trade union representative can give you general support and advice, or act for you if this would help. We will encourage the trade unions to support any member of staff who raises a concern with them.

### **How we respond to your concerns**

The way we deal with the concern will depend on what it involves.

We will first make enquiries to decide whether we should carry out an investigation and, if so, how we should go about it. Throughout all our enquiries and any investigation, our main concern will be to put the interests of the public first.

Your concern may be investigated by senior management, our internal auditors, or through the disciplinary process, or we may refer it to:

- the police;
- other agencies (for example, if it involves the abuse of children or vulnerable adults it may be referred to the Executive Director of Health and Social Care);
- our external auditor; or
- an independent investigator.



If your concern or allegation can be handled under any other procedure or policy, we will pass it on to the relevant person and let you know. We may be able to settle some concerns without carrying out an investigation but by taking action agreed by you. If we need to take urgent action, we will do this before carrying out any investigation.

Within 10 working days of you raising a concern, the officer dealing with the matter will:

- acknowledge that we have received your concern;
- explain how we will handle the matter; and
- tell you what support is available to you.

It is difficult to set further timescales as they depend on the nature of the allegation and the type of investigation that needs to be carried out.

The amount of contact you have with the investigating officer will depend on the nature of your concern, the potential difficulties involved, and how clear the information you have given is.

If you need to have a meeting, you can be accompanied by a friend or a representative from a trade union or professional association. Meetings with the person investigating the matter will normally take place in his or her office but can be arranged elsewhere, but not in your home unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We will take steps to reduce any difficulties you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you need to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, we will arrange for you to get advice on the procedure.

We will usually give you feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation. Details of any concerns raised will be kept confidential by the LA (unless they are found to be malicious and lead to disciplinary procedures) but will not be placed on your personal file.

### **How you can take a matter further?**

We hope you will be satisfied with any action we take. If you're not, and you want to take the matter outside the LA, you could contact:

- the Chair of Governors who will convene the appropriate committee;
- our external auditor;
- the Audit Commission;
- your local Citizens' Advice Bureau;
- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations;
- a relevant voluntary organisation; or
- the police.

If you take the matter outside the LA, take care not to reveal any confidential information.

**Independent advice**

You can get independent advice or support from an organisation called Public Concern at Work. Their address is:

Suite 306  
16 Baldwin Gardens  
London  
EC1N 7RJ.  
Phone: 020 7404 6609  
E-mail: [whistle@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:whistle@pcaw.co.uk)

