

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Millfields Primary School and Nursery

1. INTRODUCTION

(1) All of us at one time or another have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are any of the following, it can be difficult to know what to do:

- a criminal offence (e.g. fraud, corruption or theft) has been/is likely to be committed
- a miscarriage of justice has been/is likely to occur
- the health or safety of any individual has been/is likely to be endangered
- the environment has been/is likely to be damaged
- public funds are being used in an unauthorised manner
- the Council's Constitution (including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, etc.) have or are not being observed or are being breached by member and/or officers
- sexual or physical abuse of any member of staff or service recipient is taking place
- discrimination is occurring to any member of staff or service recipient on grounds of sex, race or disability
- any other form of improper action or conduct is taking place
- information relating to any of the above is being deliberately concealed or attempts are being made to conceal the same.

(2) You may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to yourself, perhaps feeling it's none of your business or that it's only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, managers or to the organisation. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.

(3) The Governing Body at Millfields takes very seriously any form of malpractice and has introduced this procedure to enable you to raise your concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. We would rather that you raised the matter when it is just a concern rather than wait for proof.

(4) If something is troubling you, which you think we should know about or look into, please use this procedure. If you are aggrieved about your personal position, the Grievance Procedure, which is available from the school office, is available to you. However, this Whistle Blowing Procedure is also available for concerns about your personal position where you are uneasy about using the Grievance Procedure, as well as where the interests of others or of the organisation itself is at risk.

If in doubt – raise it!

2. THE GOVERNING BODY ASSURES YOU OF:

Your safety

(1) The Governing Body at Millfields are committed to this policy. If you raise a genuine concern under this Policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Provided you are acting in good faith, it does not matter if you are mistaken. Of course we do not extend this assurance to someone who maliciously raises a matter they know is untrue.

Your Confidence

- (2) The Governing Body at Millfields will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, we recognise that you may nonetheless want to raise a concern in confidence under this Policy. If you ask to have your identity kept in confidence, we will not disclose it without your consent. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identity (for instance because your evidence is needed in court), we will discuss with you whether and how we can proceed.
- (3) Remember that if you do not tell us who you are, it will be much more difficult for us to look into the matter or to protect your position or to give you feedback. Accordingly, while we will consider anonymous reports, this Policy is not appropriate for concerns raised anonymously.

3 HOW WE WILL HANDLE THE MATTER?

- (1) Once you have told us of your concern, we will look into it to assess initially what action should be taken. This may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. We will tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact him/her and whether your further assistance may be needed. If you request, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it.
- (2) When you raise the concern you may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you do have any personal interest in the matter, we do ask that you tell us at the outset. If your concern falls more properly within the Grievance Procedure we will tell you.
- (3) While the purpose of this Policy is to enable us to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, we will give you as much feedback as we properly can. If requested, we will confirm our response to you in writing. However, we may not be able to tell you the precise action we've taken where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed by us to someone else.

4 HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN INTERNALLY

- (1) If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your Line Manager. This may be done orally or in writing.
- (2) If you feel unable to raise the matter with your Line Manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with the Head teacher.

Please say if you want to raise the matter in confidence so that they can make appropriate arrangements.

- (3) If these channels have been followed and you still have concerns, or if you feel that the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, please contact the Chair of Governors via the Clerk of Governors.
- (4) If you are unsure whether to use this procedure or you want independent advice at any stage you may contact Cheshire East Local Authority.

If you are unsure whether to use this policy or you want independent advice at any stage, you may contact, if applicable, your relevant trade union lawyer.

This Code is intended to provide an avenue within Millfields to raise concerns. If an employee takes the matter outside the school, s/he should ensure that no disclosure of confidential information takes place and should check with the Headteacher, if unsure, as the Public Interest Disclosure Act does not provide blanket protection and could leave employees vulnerable to disciplinary or other action, if they disclose confidential information in circumstances not covered by the Act.

An employee who is not satisfied with the action taken by the school and feels it right to question the matter further, s/he may consider the following possible contact points:

- Internal Audit and/or the District Auditor
- the employee's Trade Union
- the Citizens Advice Bureau and / or law centre / firm
- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- the Local Government Ombudsman
- the Information Commissioner
- a relevant voluntary organisation
- the Police and/ or Health and Safety Executive.

MONITORING & REPORTING

This policy will be monitored by SMT and Governors. Monitoring strategies will include scrutiny of records/meetings and discussions with staff as necessary. The monitoring of the policy will be reported to the Governing Body – Staffing & Finance Committee.

The Governing Body will evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the policy.

This policy will be shared with staff every year and reviewed with the Governors every two years.

Policy Agreed by Governing Body: October 2017

Policy to be reviewed: October 2019