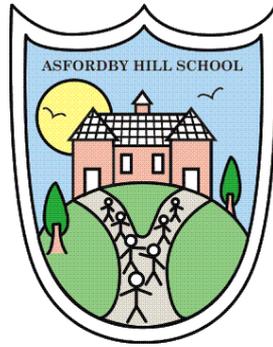


The Asfordby Hill School



Whistle Blowing Policy

This Policy Links With: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gifts & Hospitality• Fraud Policy• Risk Register• Dignity at Work	
Recommended:	
Statutory:	✓
Date Reviewed:	Autumn 2019
Date of Next Review:	Autumn 2020
Committee Responsible for Review:	Finance and Staffing
Signature of the Chair of Governors:	

Purpose

The Local Authority and the Governing Body are committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with this commitment, the School encourages employees with serious concerns about the School's work to raise their concerns. This also applies to concerns about the activities of staff and Governors and external organisations in their dealings with the School.

This policy:

- provides the basis on which employees can raise any such concerns they may have, and receive feedback; (the feedback will include information about the outcome of the investigation but not the detail of the investigation nor the action taken).
- allows employees to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the School's response, and;
- gives protection from reprisals or victimisation for 'whistleblowing' in good faith.

The Policy

There are existing procedures in place to enable employees to raise grievances about their own employment. This policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of individual grievances.

The concern may be about something that:

- is unlawful;
- is against the School Policies;
- amounts to improper conduct;
- seems likely to cause damage or harm to a member of the public or the environment;
- 'covers up' an issue of concern.

Safeguards for staff raising concerns

Harassment or Victimisation

The Governing Body recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisals from those responsible for the malpractice. The School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take all possible measures to protect employees who raise legitimate concerns.

Confidentiality

The School and Local Authority will protect the identity of employees who raise concerns and do not want their name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated, however, that the investigation may reveal the source of the information and statements made by the employees who raised the issue may be required as part of the evidence.

The School encourages employees to put their name to allegations made. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they will be considered at the discretion of the School and Local Authority. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken account of will include:

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

If an allegation is made in good faith, but is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the employee. However, if employees make allegations that are malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action against them may be considered.

Raising a Concern

The sooner employees raise their concern the easier it is to take action.

As a first step, employees should normally raise concerns with their Headteacher. This will depend on the nature of their concern and on the seriousness, and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the inappropriate practice. Employees who feel that they cannot approach management in their own school should approach either:

- Chair of Governors
- Trade Union representative

Concerns should normally be raised in writing. This letter should set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why the employee is concerned about the situation. Employees who do not feel able to put their concerns in writing can telephone or meet the appropriate officer.

Employees may invite their Trade Union to raise the matter in conjunction with them.

School Response

The action taken by the School and/or Local Authority will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may, for example:

- be investigated internally
- be referred to the Police
- be referred to the External Auditor, or
- form the subject of an independent inquiry.

In order to protect individuals, the Schools, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection or unlawful discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

Within two weeks of a concern being received, the Chair of Governors will write to the employee who raised the issue:

- acknowledging that the concern has been raised
- indicating how it is proposed to deal with the matter
- where possible, giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response, and
- telling the employee whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.

The amount of contact between the officers considering the issue and the employee, who has raised the issue, will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from the employee.

When any meeting is arranged with the employee, he or she will be given the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a work colleague either of whom must not be involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

The school accepts that employees need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal or contractual constraints, employees will receive information about the outcomes of any investigations.

The feedback must include information about the outcome of any investigation but not the detail of action taken against another member of staff (e.g. disciplinary action taken is a confidential process and should not be shared with the person who has raised the concern).

The Outcome of the Investigation

The policy is intended to provide employees with an avenue to raise relevant concerns within the School. It is hoped that employees will be satisfied with the action taken as a result. If employees are not satisfied and feel it is right to take the matter outside the school, the following are possible contact points, some of all of which may be appropriate:

- The Director of Children and Young People's Service

- A County Councillor (for employees who live in the area of the Local Authority)
- the Internal Audit Section (telephone number 0116 265 7618)
- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- the Police
- the charity Public Concern at Work (telephone number 020 7630 1019)
- Haines Watts, School Auditors/Accountants

If employees do take the matter outside of the School or Local Authority, they need to ensure that they do not disclose otherwise confidential information.

Person Responsible for Whistleblowing

The Chair of Governors who has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. He/she maintains a record of concerns raised and the outcomes and will report, as necessary, to the Governing Body.

Review of Procedure

This procedure shall be subject to review every two years and may be changed from time to time.

Welfare Service

The Employee Welfare Service provide a confidential counselling and information service to all employees and can be contacted on 0116 265 6178.