



“Together we learn, Together we succeed”

Whistleblowing Policy

This policy has been written to ensure that the school’s ethos, curriculum, and practices promote shared values. It also encourages staff, children and other members of the Welbourne community to understand others and to value diversity, irrespective of gender, race, belief and sexual orientation.

As a Rights Respecting School, we put the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of our planning, policies, practice and ethos.

Policy Agreed	Reviewed by	Ratified on	Approved by	Signature on behalf FGB	Next Review
10/7/17	J Stone/R Lane	11/3/19 8/3/2021 6/3/23	FGB		March 2025

Welbourne Primary School

Whistleblowing Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 The Governing Body of Welbourne Primary School is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity and accountability. It therefore wishes to encourage and enable staff to raise serious concerns about conduct at the school, rather than ignoring a problem or reporting their concerns elsewhere.

1.2 Examples of malpractice include:

- failure to comply with legal obligations;
- miscarriages of justice;
- health and safety dangers;
- environmental risks;
- concealing information about any of the foregoing;
- suspected financial or fraudulent malpractice such as embezzlement or bribery;
- corruption, dishonesty, etc;
- unauthorised use of public funds;
- breaches of agreed school or governing body procedures; and
- improper conduct of other kinds.

1.3 Whistleblowing is very different from a complaint or grievance. It only applies when the person raising the issue (to be known in this document as the 'representor') has no vested interest and is acting as a witness to misconduct or malpractice that s/he has observed.

1.4 This procedure is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. Whistle blowing is not appropriate for:

- dealing with issues between an employee and the school which relate to the employee's own employment or rights of employment conditions generally (these are found in the employee's terms and conditions of employment as well as the Code of Conduct); and
- dealing with pupil complaints or concerns, which are dealt with in the complaints policy which is found on the school website.

1.5 If a matter of concern about child protection or safeguarding is raised under these procedures it will be referred immediately to the Designated Child Protection Lead who will deal with it under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is found on the school website.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of the procedures set out below are to ensure all members of staff are:

- encouraged to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice;
- provided with avenues to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- given a response to their concerns and are aware of how to pursue them if not satisfied; and
- reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief any disclosure has been made in good faith.

3. Protecting the whistleblower

3.1 Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, a whistleblower is protected from detriment and unfair dismissal. The school will support and not discriminate against concerned employees who apply the whistleblowing procedure, provided any claim is made in good faith. However, the school and staff have the right to protect themselves against unfounded, false or malicious accusations.

4. When should whistleblowing procedures be used?

- 4.1 If a member of staff has concerns about wrongdoing in the school and feels that those concerns are sufficiently serious to require reporting, this policy outlines what should be done.
- 4.2 Whistleblowing should only be used when the representor has reasonable grounds for believing that malpractice has been or may be committed. It must never be used without good grounds, falsely or maliciously.

5. The Procedure

- 5.1 Any issue raised will be kept confidential while the procedure is being used.
- 5.2 The representor should raise his / her concern with his / her line manager. This may be done orally or in writing.
- 5.3. However, if the concern relates to the representor's line manager or any person to whom he or she reports other than the Headteacher, the representor should raise the issue with the Headteacher.
- 5.4 If the concern relates to the Headteacher, the representor should raise the matter with the Chair of the Governing Body. The Chair of the Governing Body can be contacted through chair@welbourne.haringey.sch.uk
- 5.5 The person with whom the matter is raised is referred to the 'assessor'. The assessor will:
- acknowledge the concern raised by the representor in writing and arrange to meet with him/her;
 - interview the representor as soon as possible generally, within seven working days, in confidence. NB Early interview will be essential if the concern relates to an immediate danger to loss of life or serious injury or risk to pupils;
 - if the representor is not accompanied by a recognised trade union representative or a work colleague, inform the representor that s/he may be accompanied by a recognised trade union representative or a work colleague

at the interview and that the assessor may be accompanied by a member of the school staff to take notes;

- at the interview, obtain as much information as possible from the representor about the grounds for the belief of wrongdoing;
- advise the representor of the appropriate route to pursue if the matter does not fall under this procedure

5.6 Promptly and within ten working days of the interview, the assessor will recommend one or more of the following:

- the matter will be further investigated internally by the school;
- that the matter be investigated by external consultants appointed by the school;
- the matter be reported to an external agency;
- disciplinary proceedings to be implemented against an employee;
- the route for the representor to pursue the matter if it does not fall within this procedure; or
- that no further action is taken by the school.

5.7 The grounds on which no further action is taken include:

- the assessor is satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, there is no evidence that wrongdoing within the meaning of this procedure has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- the assessor is satisfied that the representor is not acting in good faith;
- the matter is already (or has been) the subject of proceedings under one of the school's other procedures or policies; or
- the matter concerned is already (or has been) the subject of legal proceedings, or has already been referred to an external agency.

5.8 The recommendation of the assessor will be made to the Headteacher. However, should it be alleged that the Headteacher is involved in the alleged wrongdoing, the recommendation will be made to the Governing Body.

5.9 The outcome of the initial investigation will be reported in confidence to the Governing Body at its next meeting. The Headteacher or Chair of the Governing Body, as appropriate, will ensure that the recommendation(s) of the assessor are implemented unless there is good reason for not doing so in whole or in part. Such a reason will be reported to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

5.10 The representor's identity will be kept confidential unless the representor otherwise consents or unless there are grounds to believe that the representor has acted maliciously. In the absence of such consent or grounds, the assessor will not reveal the identity of the representor except:

- where the assessor is under a legal obligation to do so;
- where the information is already in the public domain; or

- on a legally privileged basis to a professionally qualified lawyer for the purpose of obtaining legal advice.

5.11 The conclusion of any agreed investigation (with due regard to confidentiality or data protection in relation to the level of detail provided) will be reported by the assessor to the representor promptly and generally within twenty-eight working days of the initial interview.

5.12 All responses to the representor will be made in writing and sent to the representor's home address.

5.13 If the representor has not had a response within the above time limit or such reasonable extension as the school requires, the representor may go to an appropriate external agency under paragraph 7, but must inform the assessor before doing so.

5.14 The representor may at any time disclose the matter on a legally privileged basis to a professionally qualified lawyer for the purpose of taking legal advice.

6. Malicious Accusations

6.1 A deliberately false or malicious accusation made by a representor is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure, as well as potentially exposing the representor to legal liability.

7. Informing External Agencies

7.1 Within the school all staff have a duty of confidentiality. The duty of confidentiality is implied by the law in every contract of employment and prohibits employees from publicly disclosing employers' confidential information, unless it is in the public interest that the information is disclosed or unless the school fails to follow required procedures. Other legal restrictions on the disclosure of information, for example under data protection legislation, may also apply.

7.2 This procedure is intended to provide individuals with an avenue to raise concerns within the school. If this procedure has been exhausted but the representor is not satisfied and feels it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points:

- LADO
- Public Concern at Work;
- Audit Commission;
- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations;
- a solicitor;
- the police;
- Department for Education;
- Member of Parliament; and
- Health and Safety Executive

7.3 Whistleblowing to an external agency without first going through the internal procedure is a breach of the school's Code of Conduct.

7.4 Whistleblowing to the media is not appropriate or permitted in any circumstances.

8 Confidential employee enquiries

8.1 Employees may, on a confidential basis, seek prior guidance from the Headteacher if they wish to establish whether any course of conduct on their part or on the part of another employee may amount to wrongdoing under these procedures. Such enquiry shall be kept confidential. The Headteacher will attempt to provide guidance on the basis of the information provided, but such guidance shall not prejudice the rights of the school or any person under these procedures.

9 Monitoring, evaluation and review

9.1 The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.