

# Whistleblowing Policy

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## 1. About this procedure

The Governing Body is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity and it expects all the school's staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

This procedure covers all the school's

- Employees;
- Governors;
- Consultants;
- Those on work experience or work-shadowing;
- Volunteers;
- Casual and/or agency workers.

Where the matter pertains to the Chair of Governors/Governing Body or, exceptionally, the Headteacher (ie in cases where the Governing Body would not be able to deal with the matter) Bristol City Council's Whistleblowing Procedure should be followed.

This procedure

- Does not form part of any employee's contract of employment;
- May be amended at any time;
- Should not be used for complaints relating to an employee's personal circumstances, such as the way s/he has been treated at work. In those cases you should use the school's grievance procedure;
- Will be reviewed regularly by the Governing Body.

The Governing Body will regularly monitor the number of Whistleblowing disclosures.

## 2. What is whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing, or dangers, in relation to any of the school's activities. This may include:

- Criminal activity;
- Failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
- Miscarriages of justice;
- Danger to health and safety;
- Damage to the environment;
- Bribery (including under BCC's, or the school's Anti-corruption and Bribery Policy);
- Financial fraud or mismanagement;
- Breach of our internal policies and procedures including the Code of Conduct;
- Conduct likely to damage our reputation or financial wellbeing;
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- Negligence;
- The deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

Anyone who is unsure as to whether, or not, to use this procedure, or who wants impartial advice at any stage, should contact the independent charity Public Concern at Work which operates a confidential helpline. Its advisers will give free, confidential advice. The contact details can be found at the end of this procedure.

### 3. How to raise a concern

Please complete the form at Appendix 1 to this procedure and give it to the Headteacher, or Chair of Governors.

You will receive an initial response within 10 working days, and be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, or a nominated governor (as appropriate) as soon as possible, to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings held under this procedure. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

In cases where the Chair of Governors/Governing Body (or exceptionally the Headteacher where you believe that the Governing Body would not be able to deal with the matter) is/are part of your concern you can follow Bristol City Council's Whistleblowing Procedure which can be found on the council's web site at [Bristol City Council's Whistleblowing Procedure](#).

### 4. Confidentiality

The Governing Body hopes that all staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this procedure and discourages you from making an anonymous disclosure.

Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult, or impossible, to investigate, particularly if further information cannot be obtained from the whistleblower. It is also more difficult to establish the credibility of any allegations. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, the Governing Body will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it, where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

Where you choose to raise a concern anonymously, it will be treated in the same way as where a whistleblower's name is known.

Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed are able to contact Public Concern at Work, the independent whistleblowing charity, which offers a confidential helpline. Contact details are at the end of this procedure.

### 5. External Disclosures

The aim of this procedure is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. You are strongly encouraged to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Protect – the independent whistleblowing charity operates a confidential helpline and contact details can be found at the end of this procedure.

### 6. Investigations and Outcome

Once you have raised a concern, an initial assessment will be carried out to determine the scope of any investigation. You will be informed of the outcome of the assessment and may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential. Accordingly the need for confidentiality may prevent you being given specific details of the investigation, or its outcome, or any disciplinary or other action taken as a result.

Where it is concluded that a whistleblower has made false allegations, maliciously, or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

## 7. Protection and Support for Whistleblowers

The governors aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this procedure, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should raise it formally using the school's Grievance Procedure.

If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using the school's Grievance Procedure or Whistleblowers will be protected from threats and/or retaliation. Staff who are involved in such conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, and in some cases the whistleblower could have a right to sue individuals personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

Protect (independent Whistleblowing Charity)

Helpline 020 3117 2520.

email [whistle@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:whistle@pcaw.co.uk)

Employee Assistance Programme

Education Support

Helpline 08000 562561







## Appendix 2

### Bristol City Council Whistleblowing Process Flowchart

# Whistleblowing Process for Employees Working in Schools

