

St William of Perth Catholic Primary School

Whistleblowing Policy



1. Introduction

The Governing Body of St William of Perth Catholic Primary School is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, honesty and professionalism in the workplace and in doing so complying with its legal obligations. Whilst the Governing Body will make every effort to ensure that its business is conducted according to these standards, staff or other workers may become aware of, or suspect, certain failures or wrongdoings.

The Governing Body recognise their duty in such circumstances to ensure staff and other workers, who raise concerns under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), do so without fear of victimisation or detriment. Governors wish to encourage the raising of serious concerns within the remit of this policy where the following criteria are met:

- > The individual raising the concern is a 'worker' covered by the Act
- > The concern raised is of the right type (a 'qualifying disclosure')
- > The concern is revealed to the right person, and in the right way (making it a 'protected disclosure')

Governors recognise that there may be occasions where someone may not meet these criteria. In such circumstances you are reminded of alternative routes to raise your concerns shown in section 9 of this policy. If you are in doubt we would always encourage contact with the Headteacher regarding any concerns in the first instance.

2. Who is covered by this policy

The Governing Body recognise that this policy is applicable only to “workers” as defined by the PIDA and as such you must meet one of the following criteria:

- > You are an employee of the school
- > You are an agency worker or trainee on work experience within school
- > You work for a third party employer interacting with the school

Where you meet one of these definitions of a “worker” then any serious concern that qualifies under this policy is encouraged to be disclosed and the Governing Body will protect you against any detrimental treatment.

3. What “qualifying disclosures” are covered by this policy

A worker as defined above needs to ensure that the information they wish to disclose meets certain defined criteria. Only through meeting these criteria will a disclosure fall within the remit of this policy. To ensure that a “Qualifying Disclosure” is made you should reasonably believe that the disclosure of information relates to a serious action in one or more of the following areas:

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- > A criminal offence;
- > Breach of a legal obligation;
- > Miscarriage of justice;
- > Danger to the Health & Safety of any individual;
- > Damage to the environment;
- > Any deliberate concealment of the above matters

By releasing such information in good faith and in an appropriate way a member of staff or other worker can be assured of protection against detrimental treatment through this policy.

4. Ensuring a “Protective Disclosure” through this policy

Where in good faith you believe one of the above events have happened, is happening, or is likely to happen in the near future, you should raise the issue in the first instance informally with your line manager within school. The Governing Body will expect your manager to assess the nature of the concern and take appropriate action and inform you of the outcome.

Where you feel that it is inappropriate to approach your immediate manager, or where you believe they have failed to act appropriately in assessing your concern, then you should approach a designated manager approved by the Governing Body to hear “whistleblowing” concerns within school. Where you are not an employee of the school, but are covered by this policy, then concerns must also be raised with this designated manager.

Governors have determined that the following designated managers have responsibility for investigating concerns raised under this policy:

- > Issues relating to Health & Safety will be assessed by – the Headteacher or delegate
- > Issues relating to Child Protection will be assessed by – the Headteacher or delegate
- > Issues relating to matters of the faith will be assessed by – the Headteacher or delegate

All other issues should be referred to the Headteacher for assessment.

Where the appropriate designated manager are themselves involved in the concern you wish to disclose then you should refer your concern to the Headteacher for assessment, or where they are involved to the Chair of Governors.

5. Timescales for assessing a disclosure

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Once a concern has been formally raised with the designated manager you will, within five standard School Days of a disclosure being received, be given a letter from the designated manager inviting you to a meeting to discuss your concern in detail. This meeting will be within ten standard School Days of the date of initial disclosure. To speed up any assessment of your concerns you should set out in writing the background detail and reasons for your concern and make these available prior to this meeting.

Following this meeting the designated manager will continue with their assessment of your concern and write back to you with their conclusions within ten standard School Days of the meeting. If the assessment is likely to take longer than this you will be informed of the reasons and any amended timeframe for conclusion.

You are entitled to be accompanied to any meeting that you attend in connection with the assessment by a work colleague or a trade union representative. Equally, the designated manager may be supported by Human Resources, as required.

6. Confidentiality

The Governing Body view confidentiality as a two way process and will endeavour to maintain this approach, though we recognise this cannot always be guaranteed. In return we would expect concerns you have raised through this policy **will remain equally confidential** until there has been an opportunity for their assessment. We also wish to state that although a concern may also be raised anonymously, it may impede the designated managers ability to undertake a thorough assessment if you choose to do so. We would hope that the protection provided by this policy would negate the need for such actions.

1. Reporting arrangements

The Governing Body have determined that they will receive an annual report on the number of referrals under this policy from the Headteacher. Where specific concerns have been validated the staffing committee will support the Headteacher in implementing any required actions, as appropriate.

2. External Referral

Only in exceptional circumstances, will the Governing Body approve the disclosure of concerns outside of school unless having first provided an opportunity to address them through the above procedure. However, where you feel you are unable to raise your concerns through the above procedure then you may consider raising them with an appropriate external regulatory authority as prescribed by the Government. A list of external regulators can be found at the following e-mail address www.pcaw.co.uk/legislation/p_regulators.html or can be obtained from Public Concern

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at Work, Suite 301, 6 Baldwins Gardens, London EC1N 7RJ or by phoning their helpline on 020 7404 6609.

Where a disclosure is made outside of the scope of this policy or in direct breach of this policy, you will not be protected. If a disclosure is made knowing it is untrue or for personal gain then you may be subject to disciplinary action under the school disciplinary policy.

10 Allegations Against Members of Staff and Volunteers

- St William of Perth recognises that allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.
- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns will always be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.
- St William of Perth understands the duty to refer to the LADO where it is alleged that anyone working in the school has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including volunteers/supply staff/visitors) posing a risk of harm to children, then:
 - Allegations should be referred immediately to the Head Teacher or deputy in their absence who will first contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member. Please refer to the Medway LADO Leaflet if you need further information.
 - In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher then staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the Chair of Governors who will contact the LADO in the first instance.
 - Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors should contact the LADO directly on 01634 331065.

- The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will seek advice from the LADO within 24 hours of the alleged incident. No member of staff or the Governing Body will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.
- St William of Perth has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or HR.

11. Alternatives to Whistleblowing

Where you are not a worker covered by this policy, (for example you are a parent, school volunteer or member of the public), but you wish to raise a serious concern then you should discuss this with the appropriate member of staff or failing this, the Headteacher. If following this informal route you still have serious concerns, then you should consider action through the school complaints procedure.

Where you are a worker covered by this policy, but the concern relates to an internal school procedure or act that has a direct effect on you as a member of staff, then governors would expect that member of staff to raise these concerns through the school grievance procedure.

12. Further Information

- Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:
 - General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: Advice on Whistleblowing.
 - Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

The link below provides additional information for staff.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

KCSIE Links

KCSIE 2024 Part four: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff, including supply teachers and volunteers. Duties as an employer and an employee, 87 - 104

[Keeping children safe in education 2024](#)

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