

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE



St. Augustine's Junior C of E (VA) Junior School

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Date ratified: 15th Sept 2021

Review date: Autumn 2022 (this policy will be reviewed annually)

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St Augustine's CofE (VA) Junior School

Whistle-Blowing Policy and Procedure

This guidance is written for staff working with children and young people in education settings and should be read in conjunction with Peterborough City Council Whistle Blowing policy, PSCB Managing Allegations or Serious Concerns in Respect of any Adult who Works or Volunteers with Children (<http://www.peterboroughscb.org.uk/>) and *Keeping Children Safe in Education* Part 4.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation; these feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young person who is targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

The policy applies to all employees and those contractors working for the School on School premises, for example, agency staff, builders, and drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the School.

"Absolutely without fail - challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong"

With acknowledgement to Sounding the Alarm - Barnardos

Don't think 'What if I'm wrong?' - think 'What if I'm right?'

Reasons for whistle blowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

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What stops people from whistle blowing?

- Starting a chain of events which spirals
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

Raising a concern

The PSCB has specific guidance on their website relating to management of allegations against an adult working with children or young people. In Peterborough, allegations against a member of staff or a volunteer organisation working with children and young people must be referred to the **Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs)**:

GISELA JARMAN: 01733 864038 JANE BELLAMY: 01733 864790

The LADO must be told, within one working day, of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to meet the criteria so that s/he can consult or refer to the Police Designated Unit Manager and the relevant Children's Services Team Manager as appropriate in accordance with the PSCB policy on managing allegations against staff, carers and volunteers.

The procedures apply to situations when:

- There are suspicions or allegations of abuse by a person who works with children in either a paid or unpaid capacity - as a permanent, temporary or agency staff member, contract worker, consultant, volunteer, approved foster carer, child minder or approved adopter
- It is discovered that an individual known to have been involved previously in child abuse, is or has been working with children.

What you should do

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner it is possible for action to be taken
- Try to pinpoint what practice is concerning you and why
- Approach someone you trust and who you will believe will respond
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response - don't let matters rest
- Ideally you should put your concerns in writing
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern

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What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if the concern was raised in good faith but proves to be false or unsubstantiated
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence

Self-reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, maybe a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned.

(Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.)

Data Protection

In line with data protection requirements, information about a child or an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

- Protect children
- Safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected
- Facilitate enquiries
- Avoid victimisation
- Manage disciplinary / complaints aspects

The Designated Safeguarding Lead may ask you for further information in order to make any referrals. You should not discuss or share this information with anyone else within the organisation. Any paperwork you have generated should be stored securely.

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