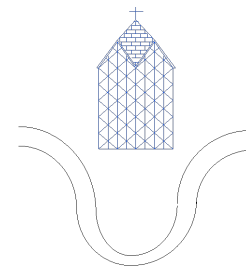


**ST PAUL with ST LUKE**  
**CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
Leopold Street, Bow, London E3 4LA

## Whistleblowing Policy version Control

<b>Version no</b>	<b>Amendments</b>	<b>Approval date</b>
2	Updated with many small changes	Jan 2017
3	Updated with some small changes	July 2017



## Whistle Blowing Policy

### Introduction

At St Paul with St Luke we are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage staff and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns. In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or relevant agencies. This procedure encourages staff to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within school and in LBTH (London Borough of Tower Hamlets) rather than over-looking a problem or raising the matter outside.

It applies to all staff, agency workers and supply staff and those contractors working on the premises, for example, cleaners, builders and drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with LBTH in their own premises.

It is recognised that whistle blowing may engender feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or that staff may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in the behaviour that is causing concern, continuing.

### Other Complaints Procedures

This procedure is separate from the school Complaints Procedures and other statutory reporting procedures. Child Protection issues should be reported according to the specific guidelines laid out in that policy.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affects an individual.

### Aims of Policy

- To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected;
- To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns;
- To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be a mistake.

### What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- criminal activity;
- child protection and/or safeguarding concerns; \* See note at the end of this policy
- miscarriages of justice;
- danger to health and safety;
- damage to the environment;
- failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
- financial fraud or mismanagement;
- negligence;
- breach of the school's internal policies and procedures including its Code of Conduct (Protocol Policy);
- conduct likely to damage the School's reputation;
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

A 'whistleblower' is a person who raises a genuine concern in good faith relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of the school's activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy.

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to staff's own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases you should follow the Grievance Policy and Procedure.

If staff are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy they should seek advice from the Headteacher and if the matter is in relation to an alleged wrongdoing by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher then staff should seek the advice of the Designated Governor.

### **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.

#### **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 whistleblowing concern**

The school hopes that in many cases staff will be able to raise any concerns with their Line Manager, speaking to them in person or putting the matter in writing if they prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving a concern quickly and effectively. In some cases they may refer the matter to the Governing Body.

However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your Line Manager has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact one of the following:

#### **The Headteacher**

#### **The Governor with responsibility for Whistleblowing matters (Bob Gilbert)**

The Headteacher will arrange a meeting with the 'whistleblower' as soon as practicable to discuss their concern. They will record sufficient details to enable the matter to be thoroughly investigated. As a minimum the Headteacher will record the name of the employee but also indicate whether the individual wishes his or her identity to remain confidential, if possible and depending on the nature of the concern. In some cases it will not be possible to maintain confidentiality and the Headteacher should explain this to the employee. In such instances the employee will have the choice of either withdrawing or agreeing to his/her identity becoming known to enable the concern to be effectively dealt with. Staff may bring a colleague or trade union representative to any meetings under this policy who must respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

The school will take notes and produce a written summary of the concern raised and provide the 'whistleblower' with a copy as soon as practicable after the meeting. The school will also aim to give the "whistleblower" an indication of how it proposes to deal with the matter.

#### **Confidentiality**

The school hopes that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if a member of staff wants to raise his or her concern confidentially, the school will endeavour to keep his or her identity secret in so far as it is possible to do so when following this policy and procedure. If it is necessary for anyone investigating that member of staff's concern to know the whistleblower's identity, the school will discuss this with the member of staff first.

The school does not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if the school cannot obtain further information. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible and have been made in good faith. 'whistleblowers' who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to one of the contacts listed above and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality.

If an individual misuses the policy and procedure e.g. by making malicious or repeated unsubstantiated complaints against colleagues this could give rise to action under the school's Disciplinary Procedure. If the Headteacher knows or has a suspicion that an employee comes into this category then s/he will take advice from the Designated Governor who will help to determine what action should be taken.

If you are in any doubt you can seek advice from Public Concern at Work, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are:

Public Concern at Work (Independent whistle blowing charity)

Helpline: 020 7404 6609    E-mail: [whistle@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:whistle@pcaw.co.uk)    Website: [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)

### **Concerns against Governors**

If a concern against a Governor is received then this will be treated in the same way as any other concern. It will receive the same serious consideration. The concern will be raised by the Headteacher with the Chair of Governors who will decide how it should be dealt with.

If the concern is against the Chair of Governors then clearly this process cannot be followed. In such circumstances, the concern will be taken directly to the Headteacher who will decide in consultation with the Governor with responsibility for Whistleblowing matters how it should be dealt with. In normal circumstances such a concern would be referred to the Department for Education for action.

### **Self reporting**

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps 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 the Headteacher so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

### **Investigation and outcome**

Once a member of staff has raised a concern, the school will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. The School will inform the 'whistleblower' of the outcome of its assessment. The member of staff raising the concern may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information. The school may appoint an independent investigator. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable the school to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

The school will aim to keep the member of staff informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the school from giving specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. The member of staff is required to treat any information about the investigation as strictly confidential.

If the school concludes that a 'whistleblower' has made false allegations maliciously, in bad faith or with a view to personal gain, the 'whistleblower' will be subject to disciplinary action under the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

There are no rights of appeal against any decisions taken under this procedure. However, an employee or the Headteacher will have the right to refer any particular case to the Designated Governor for review.

#### **Further advice, support and contact details Protection and support for 'whistleblowers'**

It is understandable that 'whistleblowers' are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. The school aims to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your Line Manager, Headteacher, HR Dept or Trade Union.

Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern in good faith. Detrimental treatment would include dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If a member of staff believes that he or she has suffered any such treatment, he or she should inform the Headteacher immediately. If the matter is not remedied the member of staff should raise it formally using the School's Grievance Policy and Procedure

#### **Safeguarding**

If a member of staff suspects that there is a serious safeguarding issue that they feel that the Headteacher is not taking seriously or that they believe there is a serious safeguarding issue involving the Headteacher they should in the first instance contact the Designated Safeguarding Governor.