# Wolsey House Primary School

# Whistleblowing Policy

Policy date: September 2026

Policy review date: September 2027

## 1 Introduction

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and governors. Other individuals performing functions in relation to the organisation, such as agency workers and contractors, should have a copy of this also or have least read a copy; to this end, a copy is made available on the school website.

It is important to Wolsey House Primary School that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by employees, volunteers or governors of the school is reported and properly dealt with. The Governing Body will, therefore, respond to all individuals who raise any genuine concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the school, **which are in the public interest**. This policy sets out the way in which individuals may raise any concerns that they have and how those concerns will be dealt with.

**1.1** Wolsey House Primary School expects the highest standards of conduct from all employees, volunteers and governors and will treat seriously any concern raised about illegal or improper conduct.

**1.2** Any individual covered by this policy will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the Headteacher (or the Chair of Governors if the concerns relate to the Headteacher) any serious impropriety or breach of procedure.

**1.3** The school encourages individuals to raise concerns internally wherever it is appropriate and safe to do so. However, nothing in this policy prevents a person from seeking confidential or legal advice, contacting an appropriate prescribed person or body, making a safeguarding referral, reporting a suspected crime to the police, or making another disclosure protected by law.

Individuals considering making a wider disclosure, including to the media, are strongly advised to seek independent advice from their trade union, professional association, legal adviser or the independent whistleblowing charity Protect, as additional legal conditions may apply.

**1.4** Employees who feel no action has been taken after following their school's whistleblowing procedure or, feel that following the school's whistleblowing procedure could increase the risk of harm to a child/adult, can contact the following organisations for information and support:

| | |
|---|---|
| Leicester City Safeguarding Children's Unit or LADO | 01164542440 |
| Children's Social Care, Duty and Advice | 01164541004 |
| NSPCC Whistleblowing Help Line | 0800 028 0285 |

**Don't think, "What if I'm wrong?" – Think, "What if I'm right?"**

## 2 Qualifying Disclosures

Whistleblowing law provides protection for workers who make certain disclosures in the public interest. These are known as qualifying disclosures.

A qualifying disclosure is a disclosure of information which the worker reasonably believes is made in the public interest and tends to show that one or more of the following has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur:

- A criminal offence
- A failure to comply with a legal obligation

- A miscarriage of justice
- Danger to the health or safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment
- Sexual harassment
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed.

Examples could include fraud, theft, bribery, corruption, serious safeguarding failures, unsafe working practices, unlawful discrimination, misuse of public money or deliberately concealing wrongdoing.

The person raising the concern is not expected to investigate the matter or prove that the wrongdoing has occurred. However, they must have a reasonable belief that the information tends to show wrongdoing and that raising it is in the public interest.

**2.1** Where the concerns are about **safeguarding children or young people**, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection should be notified (See section 7.2).

**2.2** It is a procedure in which the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will be expected to act swiftly and constructively in the investigation of any concerns in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.

**2.3** Concerns about a colleague's professional capability should **not** be dealt with using this procedure (but see section 7 below).

**3 When should it be used?**

This procedure is for disclosures about matters other than a breach of an employee's own contract of employment. If an employee is concerned that his/her own contract has been, or is likely to be, broken he/she should use the school's Grievance procedures.

**Where a disclosure is merely an expression of opinion** that fails to show that a legal obligation has been or is likely to be breached, it **cannot** amount to a protected or qualifying disclosure for the purposes of the whistleblowing legislation

**3.1** So this procedure is not designed to replace or be used as an alternative to the grievance procedure, which should be used where an employee is only aggrieved about his/her own situation. Nor should this policy apply where the employee simply disagrees with the way the school is run.

**3.2** Employees and volunteers must have reasonable grounds for believing the information they have is accurate and not just idle gossip or rumour.

**3.3** An employee who makes such a protected disclosure has the right not to be dismissed, subject to any other detriment, or victimised, because he/she has made a disclosure, provided it has not been made maliciously. Any employee who uses this procedure will not be penalised for doing so. The employer will not tolerate harassment and/or victimisation of any employee raising concerns.

**3.4** An employee who is not sure whether the conduct he/she is concerned about does constitute illegal or improper conduct or is unsure about how to proceed may contact the Leicester City Council HR Department – 0116 454 4310 or email: hrpolicy@leicester.gov.uk or their Professional Association/Trade Union.

**3.5** Financial regulations require that any suspicion of fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity is reported to Internal Audit for possible investigation. Normally an employee must first report any suspicion of such an irregularity to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors (but see 5), who will in turn report it to Internal Audit. Similar principles apply to Academies where the funding agency must be informed.

**4. Principles**

**4.1** Any concern raised under this procedure will be acknowledged and considered promptly, fairly and objectively. An initial assessment will be undertaken to determine the appropriate response, which may include an internal investigation, referral under another school procedure or referral to an appropriate external body.

The matter will be handled sensitively and information will be shared only with those who need to know. The person who raised the concern will be kept informed, as far as reasonably possible, of how the matter is being handled and its outcome. However, it may not be possible to share specific details where these are confidential, relate to another person or could prejudice safeguarding, disciplinary, criminal or other legal proceedings.

**4.2** No employee will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the employee will not be prejudiced because he/she has raised a legitimate concern.

**4.3** Victimisation of a worker for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.

**4.4** If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure the matter will be considered under the disciplinary procedure, in addition to any appropriate external measures.

**4.5** Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.

**4.6** An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is in itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority, employees and volunteers should not agree to remain silent.

**5. Procedure**

This process is summarised as a Flowchart at **APPENDIX 1**

**5.1** In the first instance, unless the employee reasonably believes his/her Headteacher to be involved in the wrongdoing, any concerns should be raised with the employee's Headteacher. If he/she believes the Headteacher to be involved, then the employee should proceed straight to the Governing Body or point 5.3 below. Ideally put your concerns in writing (using the form provided at **APPENDIX 2**), outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.

**5.2** The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will undertake an initial assessment of the concern to determine the appropriate response. Where the concern relates to the conduct of an adult working or volunteering in the school, consideration will be given to whether it may meet the harm threshold set out in Part Four of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*.

The harm threshold may be met where an adult 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 that they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children.

Where the harm threshold may be met, or there is uncertainty about whether it has been met, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as soon as possible and before beginning an investigation. The school will follow the advice of the LADO and, where appropriate, liaise with Children's Social Care, the police and its HR adviser. Immediate action will be taken where necessary to protect a child or another person from harm.

Where the concern does not meet the harm threshold, it will be considered in accordance with the school's Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and any other relevant procedure.

For other whistleblowing concerns, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will determine whether an investigation or another form of action is required. An appropriately independent person may be appointed to gather information. This may include obtaining written accounts and speaking to the person raising the concern and other relevant individuals. Any investigation will be proportionate, fair and conducted in accordance with the principles of this policy. The person raising the concern may be asked to clarify their account or comment on relevant information where it is appropriate and lawful to do so.

Employees and volunteers may seek advice from their trade union or professional association and may be accompanied at relevant meetings by a workplace colleague or trade-union representative who is not involved in the matter.

A person raising a concern may request that their identity is kept confidential. The school will respect this request as far as reasonably possible, but cannot guarantee confidentiality where disclosure is necessary to investigate the concern, safeguard a child or another person, comply with the law or ensure a fair process. Anonymous concerns will be considered on the basis of the information available, although anonymity may limit the school's ability to investigate fully or provide feedback.

**5.3** The person responsible for managing the concern will determine the action required following the initial assessment or investigation. This may include referral to another school procedure, management action, changes to practice, referral to an external body or consideration under the school's disciplinary procedure.

Where disciplinary action may be required, the matter will be managed by the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or an appropriately constituted governor panel, according to their delegated responsibilities and with advice from the school's HR Advisory Team. Confidential information about an individual case will not normally be shared with the full Governing Body. Governors may instead receive appropriately anonymised information to provide assurance that the school's procedures are operating effectively.

At the conclusion of the process, the person who raised the concern will be informed, as far as reasonably possible, whether the concern was upheld and whether appropriate action has been taken. The school may not be able to provide details of disciplinary, safeguarding or other confidential action relating to another person. Where no further action is considered necessary, the person raising the concern will normally be given an appropriate explanation, subject to legal and confidentiality requirements.

Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, it must be reported to the Chair of Governors. If the person raising the concern believes that the Chair has not addressed it appropriately, there is a conflict of interest, or they feel unable to use the internal procedure, they may seek advice from their trade union, professional association, legal adviser, Acas or the independent whistleblowing charity Protect. They may also contact an appropriate prescribed person or external body identified in the external reporting section of this policy.

Where the concern relates to safeguarding practice or a possible failure to protect children, the individual may contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line. A concern or allegation about an adult that may meet the harm threshold may be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer where there is a conflict of interest or the usual reporting route cannot reasonably be used.

circumstances and any evidence and will determine how to respond to the disclosure. The Monitoring Officer is currently the Service Director for Legal Services.

**External reporting and advice**

An individual who feels unable to raise a concern internally, believes that their concern has not been addressed appropriately or considers that an external disclosure is necessary may seek independent advice or contact an appropriate external body.

The external body selected should be one that is responsible for the subject matter of the concern. Depending upon the circumstances, appropriate organisations may include:

- **the Secretary of State for Education, through the Department for Education** – for matters relating to maintained schools and other educational institutions;
- **HM Revenue and Customs** – for concerns relating to tax, National Insurance, customs or associated fraud;
- **the Health and Safety Executive** – for relevant workplace or public health and safety concerns;
- **the Environment Agency** – for environmental damage, pollution or waste concerns;
- **the Information Commissioner's Office** – for concerns about data protection or freedom of information;
- **the Financial Conduct Authority** – for matters falling within its financial-services regulatory responsibilities;
- **the Competition and Markets Authority** – for possible breaches of competition or consumer law;
- **the Serious Fraud Office** – for serious or complex fraud, bribery or corruption;
- **the school or local authority's external auditor, or the Comptroller and Auditor General** – for concerns about the proper conduct of public business, value for money, fraud or corruption involving public funds;

- **the police** – where a criminal offence may have been committed; and
- **the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line** – where the concern relates to child-protection failures and the individual feels unable to raise it internally or believes it has not been addressed properly.

The current statutory list of prescribed people and bodies is available on GOV.UK. Individuals should check the list or seek advice before making an external disclosure to ensure that they approach the appropriate organisation.

Independent and confidential advice may also be sought from:

- a trade union or professional association;
- a legal adviser;
- the independent whistleblowing charity **Protect**; or
- the **Acas** helpline.

Nothing in this section prevents an individual from making an immediate safeguarding referral, contacting the LADO, reporting a matter to Children's Social Care or contacting the police where a child or another person may be at risk of harm.

**What happens next?**

The Headteacher/Chair of Governors will arrange an investigation into the matter (either by investigating the matter himself/herself or immediately passing the issue to someone in a seniorposition). The investigation may involve the employee and others involved giving written statements. The employee's statement will be taken into account and he/she will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained. An individual will not be expected to prove the truthof an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

Preliminary inquiries may be made to help decide how best to respond in the public interest. Depending on the nature of the issue raised, the response may be one or more of the following:

- management investigation;
- internal audit investigation;
- disciplinary investigation;
- referral for consideration under another Council procedure;
- referral to the police;
- referral to the District Auditor;
- an independent investigation;
- amend procedures;
- no action due to lack of sufficient evidence.

The employee raising the concern should be given information on how the matter is likely to dealt with within **10 working days** of making the disclosure (so far as legally possible and subject to rightsof confidentiality).

Employees who want to use the procedure but feel uneasy about it may wish to consult their Professional Association/Trade Union initially and bring a colleague or Professional

Association/Trade Union Representative along to any discussions, so long as the third party is not involved in the issue. If a Trade Union/Professional Association representative raises the concern onsomeone else's behalf, they will be automatically afforded the same protection from detriment. In addition, the independent charity Protect provides advice to individuals on whistleblowing in the public interest on a strictly confidential basis (https://protect-advice.org.uk/ **/** 020 3117 2520).

Where anonymity is requested, efforts will be made to meet the request where appropriate but thatmight not always be possible. The earlier and more open the expression of concern, the easier it willbe to take appropriate action. Anonymous disclosures will be considered to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable to do so, although the need to confirm or follow up evidence may make this difficult.

## 6 What should be done if an issue is raised with a member of staff?

**6.1** If a member of staff, other than the Headteacher, is approached by a colleague on a matter of concern as defined in this document, he/she is advised to take the matter to the Headteacher as above point 5.

## 7 Safeguarding Children and Young People

**7.1** All employees and volunteers have a duty to report concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils/pupils.

### 7.2 7.2 Safeguarding reporting routes

Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately. The reporting route depends upon whether the concern relates to a child, an adult working in or on behalf of the school, or the school's safeguarding practice.

**Concerns about a child**

Any concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy DSL.

This includes concerns about:

- physical, sexual or emotional abuse;
- neglect;
- child-on-child abuse;
- domestic abuse;
- exploitation, including child criminal or sexual exploitation;
- harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment or sexual violence;
- online harm;
- female genital mutilation, forced marriage or honour-based abuse;
- radicalisation;
- serious violence, weapons, gangs or county lines;
- mental health concerns where there may be a safeguarding risk;

- repeated or prolonged absence from education; and
- any other circumstance in which a child may be at risk of harm or require additional support.

Staff must follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and record the concern factually on CPOMS. An urgent verbal report must not be delayed while a CPOMS record is completed. Where a child is in immediate danger, the police or emergency services must be contacted without delay.

**Concerns about an adult working in or on behalf of the school**

Any concern or allegation about the conduct of a member of staff, supply teacher, trainee teacher, volunteer or contractor must be reported directly and immediately to the Headteacher. This includes concerns that may meet the harm threshold and concerns that may constitute a low-level concern.

A concern about the Headteacher must be reported directly to the Chair of Governors. Where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, the concern should be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Staff must not investigate the concern, repeatedly question a child or discuss the matter with anyone who does not need to know. Concerns about adults must not be entered routinely on a child's CPOMS record. They must be recorded and managed confidentially in accordance with the school's Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Part Four of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* and local safeguarding procedures.

Where information about the adult's conduct also gives rise to a concern about a child's welfare, the child-protection concern should additionally be shared with the DSL. Any confidential employment information must remain within the appropriate adult-concern record and must not be unnecessarily duplicated on CPOMS.

**Concerns about safeguarding practice within the school**

Concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice, potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements or concerns that have not been addressed appropriately should be raised with the Headteacher or another appropriate member of the senior leadership team.

Where a person feels unable to raise the matter internally, or believes that a genuine concern has not been addressed, they should follow the external reporting and advice arrangements set out in this policy.

Wolsey House Primary School DSLs are; Paula Martin, Steve Powell, Julie Cooper-Marsh, Yasin Ismail, Jim Baker, Caroline Humphrey, Jacqui Hayes, Leanne Watts and Steve Punchard.

**7.3** The reason for the concern may be the actions of a colleague (including a more senior colleague), a Governor, another pupil/pupil or someone outside the school. Whatever the reason, concerns must be reported. Failure to report a Child Protection related allegation will be in itself, a disciplinary matter.

**Law Relating To This Document**

Employment Rights Act 1996

Public Interest Disclosures Act 1998 (Whistleblowing)

Human Rights Act 1998 (Duty of care)

The legislation protecting individuals who makes a protected disclosure applies not only to employees, but also to any person who undertakes to do or perform personally (or otherwise) any work or service for the employer, regardless of the nature of the contractual relationship between them.

A Whistleblowing Policy should establish the procedure for an employee to follow if he/she has a genuine concern about a colleague's conduct or the organisation's practices. The Whistleblowing Policy should make clear what sort of allegations will count as a protected disclosure and should allow for the employee to raise these concerns with a nominated person and set out the steps that the employer will take in response.

A qualifying disclosure means any disclosure of information that in the reasonable belief of the worker is made in the public interest. The requirement that a whistle-blower make a qualifying disclosure 'in good faith' has been removed. Therefore, while the employer can seek a declaration from the whistle-blower that he or she is not knowingly making a false allegation, disciplinary action is likely to be appropriate only where there is clear evidence that the employee has misused the whistleblowing procedure. A consequence of the requirement that a disclosure be made in the public interest is that an employee will generally be precluded from being able to 'blow the whistle' about breaches of his or her employment contract.

Section 43J of the Employment Rights Act 1996 provides that a Settlement Agreement made between an employee and employer cannot prevent future protected disclosures.

Any confidentiality obligations in contracts of employment that would prevent an employee making a protected disclosure will be void.

**Contacts**

**Leicester City Council HR Department**

E mail address

Tel: 0116 454 4310

Email: hrpolicy@leicester.gov.uk

**Leicester City Council, Safeguarding Children's Unit**

Tel: 0116 454 2440

**Duty and Advice**

0116 454 1004

**LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer, Katherine Lockwood**

0116 454 2440 lado-allegations-referrals@leicester.gov.uk

**Head Teacher of School – Mr Steve Powell**

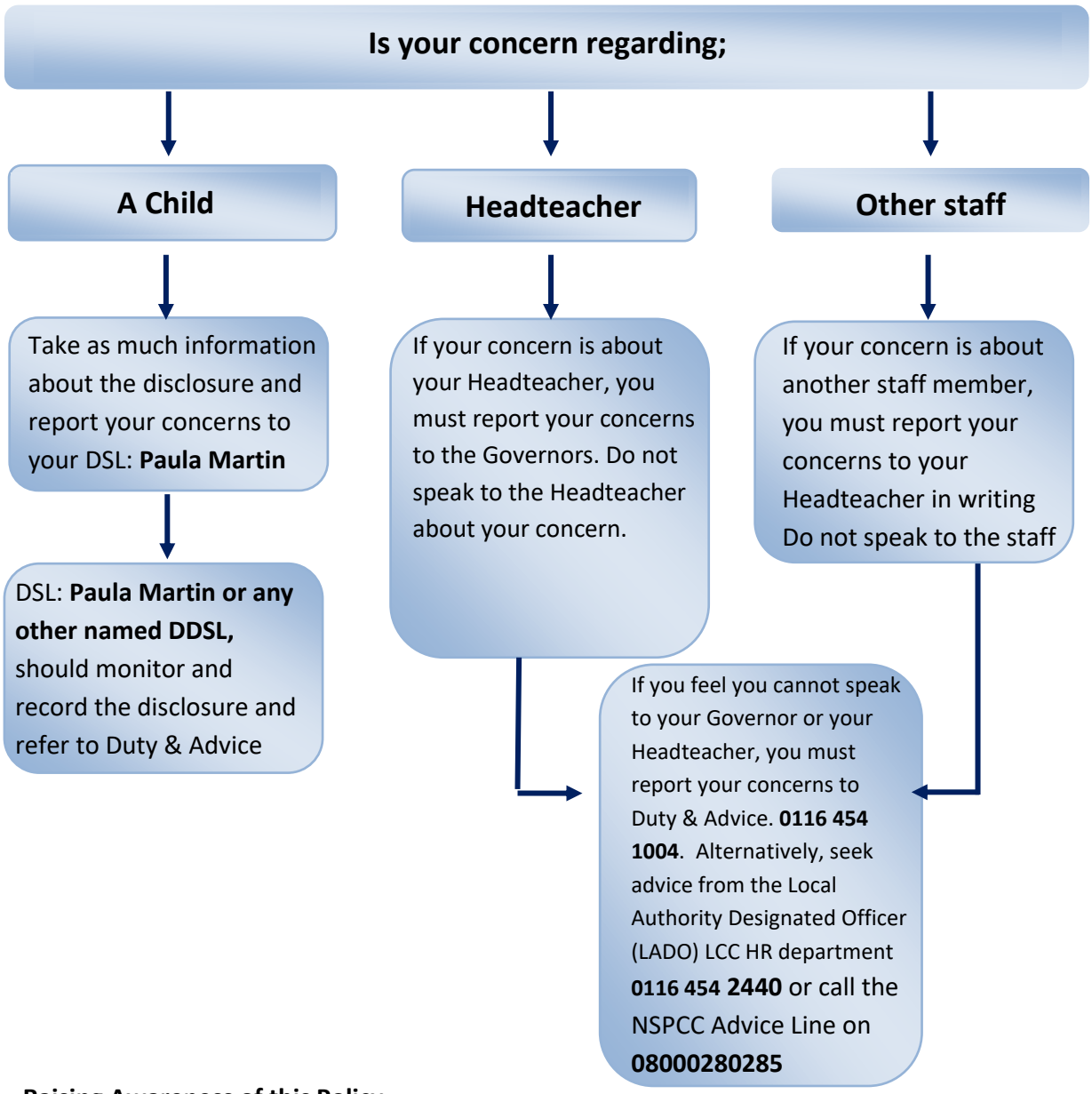
Tel: 01162 667 566

**Chair of Governors – Mr Matthew Peatfield**

mpeatfield1@wolseyhouse.leicester.sch.uk

**Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (whistleblowing) protects workers in private, public and voluntary organisations, if in the public interest they blow the whistle on wrongdoing.**

If you want to raise a concern in your school and wish to whistle blow for wrongdoing, in the first instance, use the following diagram for guidance;




**Raising Awareness of this Policy**

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the School Handbook/Prospectus
- the school website

- the Staff Handbook
- reports such as the annual report to parents and Headteacher reports to the Governing Body

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers:
- the school's whistleblowing procedures
- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction

**Equality Impact Assessment**

In implementing this policy, Wolsey House Primary School will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The school will not unlawfully discriminate against, harass or victimise any person because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

The school will take reasonable steps to ensure that this procedure is accessible to everyone. Reasonable adjustments will be made where required, and appropriate communication, translation or other support will be considered according to individual need.

No person will be treated less favourably for raising a concern, supporting another person to raise a concern or participating in an investigation. The school will monitor the implementation of this policy to ensure that it is applied fairly and does not create unjustified disadvantage for any individual or group.

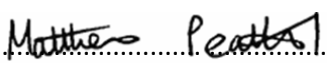
**Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy**

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement. (See Policy Evaluation)

**Reviewed: September 2025**
**Review: September 2026**

Signed..... Date: September 2026
(Headteacher)

Signed..... Date: September 2026
(Chair of Governors)

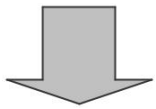
**APPENDIX 1 - THE WHISTLEBLOWING PROCESS**

***Stage 1- Making a disclosure***

Approach your Manager, Headteacher, DSL or LADO and share your concerns. You can do this verbally or in writing.

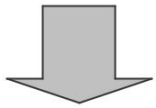
You may be asked to consider making a written or verbal statement. In such cases, a brief summary of the interview will be made and agreed by both parties.

Please see the Whistleblowing Policy for details of further contacts should you feel unable to discuss your concerns with the above parties (or feel that the response from these parties is insufficient)



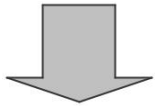
***Stage 2 – Initial Response to the Disclosure***

Consideration will be given as to what action will be taken as a result of the disclosure. You will be notified of the intended response and the reasons for it.



***Stage 3 – Launch a Management Investigation***

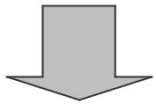
Where a Management Investigation is deemed necessary, a senior manager will be appointed as an investigating officer.



***Stage 4 – Deciding whether further action is necessary***

On the strength of the information provided by the investigation, further action may be necessary:

- If there is a case to be answered by any individual, the recognised procedure will be followed;
- Where there is no case to answer, but the concern was raised in good faith and in accordance with the Whistleblowing policy, the school will ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that you suffer no reprisals or victimisation;
- Where it is established that the allegations were malicious/vexatious or you have not acted in accordance with the Whistleblowing policy, disciplinary action may be taken.



***Stage 5 - Confirmation of the Outcome***

You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and any appropriate action taken to resolve the matter, subject to any confidentiality clause and/or legal constraints. If you are dissatisfied with this response you may take the matter further with the prescribed persons or organisations identified in the Whistleblowing Policy.

**APPENDIX 2 - WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY - REPORTING FORM**

Referral Form to be completed by Individual identifying a concern under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

**DETAILS OF PERSON RAISING CONCERNS AND ISSUE RAISED**

Nature of Concern:

| |
|---|
| |

Background (please provide dates where possible):

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|---|
| |

Who is involved?

| |
|---|
| |

Reasons for the concern:

| |
|---|
| |

| | |
|---|---|
| Name : | Date (dd/mm/yy) : / / |
| Contact No. | Time (mm:hh) : : |

| |
|---|
| Meeting Date (dd/mm/yy): / / Time (mm:hh): : |

**INVESTIGATION OF CONCERN**

| Concern Received By: | Investigations Audit Team :<br><br>HR: |
|---|---|

| Action : |
|---|

Signature:…… Time: (mm:hh): :

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

| Comments/Additional information: |
|---|