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Review initiated by	Headteacher

Whistleblowing Policy

This policy is relevant to the whole school including the EYFS

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1.0 Introduction

St Peter & St Paul School and its Trustee Board are committed to the principles and practices of openness, honesty, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment encourages all staff with genuine concerns about any aspect of its work to raise their concerns without fear of being disloyal or suffering harassment or victimisation.

All staff have a responsibility to act reasonably and to report wrongdoing. The aim of this policy is to put in place a process that protects those who make disclosures with regard to the matters listed below. All staff have access to this policy.

In accordance with Lord Nolan's Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the School's policy on whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that the School;

- Will not tolerate malpractice;
- Respects the confidentiality of staff raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively;
- Will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate;
- Will invoke the School's disciplinary policy and procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations;



- Will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all members of staff.

2.0 Definition of Whistleblowing (Protected Disclosure)

A whistle-blower is someone who, in good faith, reports certain types of wrongdoing. These will usually be in school, although not always. The disclosure of wrongdoing must be in the interest of the public, and therefore it must affect others. They will disclose information that;

- A criminal offence has been, is being or is likely to be committed
- A person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he/she is subject
- A miscarriage of justice is has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
- The health and safety of any individual has been, or is likely to be damaged
- The environment is being or is likely to be damaged
- Information tending to show that any matter falling within the paragraphs above has been or is likely to be deliberately concealed.



As a whistle blower you are protected by law. We hope that it will not be necessary for an employee to blow the whistle, but should an employee feel obliged to “blow the whistle” they will not be treated unfairly or lose their job because they have exercised their rights under this legislation (for more details click [here](#)).

Staff can raise concerns at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or they believe will happen in the near future.

3.0 Confidentiality

It is our hope that all staff will feel able to voice their whistle blowing concerns openly under this policy. If a member of staff chooses 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 whistle-blower’s identity, the School will discuss this with the member of staff first.

It may be appropriate to preserve confidentiality that concerns are raised orally rather than in writing, although members of staff are encouraged to express their concern in writing wherever possible. If there is evidence of criminal activity, then the Police will in all cases be informed.

St Peter & St Paul School does not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously as we recognises that a full and 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. Whistle-blowers 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. Anonymous concerns will be assessed by the Headteacher with a senior member of staff and a decision will be made as to whether an investigation should be undertaken. Details of the allegation and the action taken will be recorded and reported to the Chair of the Board.

Where a member of staff has genuine fears of reprisals the School will take reasonable and appropriate measures to minimise and/or eliminate reprisal risk. The Headteacher will nominate a member of the Senior Leadership Team to support the staff member making the disclosure and to monitor the risk situation.

4.0 Independent Advice about Whistleblowing

Advice can be obtained from [Protect](#), the independent whistle-blowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are:

Protect (Independent whistle blowing charity)



Helpline: 020 3117 2520

Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk

5.0 Scope

This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels of the School eg Trustees, employees, consultants/self-employed, contractors, trainees, part time and fixed term workers, volunteers etc.

The School's Trustee Board has overall responsibility for this policy and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.

The Headteacher has operational accountability for this policy.

The School's **Grievance Procedure** should be used for dealing with employment related complaints.

6.0 Raising a Concern - The Procedure

This procedure is to enable members of staff to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the School.

Malpractice is not easily defined; however, it includes allegations of fraud, financial irregularities, corruption, bribery, dishonesty, acting contrary to the staff code of ethics, criminal activities, or failing to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice, or creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment.

Reports in the first instance should be made to the individual's line manager. Where the disclosure is likely to concern the line manager the report should be made to the Head Teacher.

Any member of staff receiving a report/disclosure under this policy should refer the matter to the Headteacher who will make arrangements for the matter to be investigated and reported upon.

The Headteacher should notify the Chair of Trustees of the fact of a disclosure and the actions to be taken.

Where the Disclosure relates to the conduct of the Headteacher a report should be made directly to the Chair of Trustees.

If staff and volunteers feel unable to raise an issue with the School or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may use other whistleblowing channels, eg the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline tel : 0800 028 0285 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Once a member of staff has raised a concern, the School will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. In most cases a panel of three will



investigate any issue. The School will inform the whistle-blower of the outcome of its assessment.

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 whistle-blower has made false allegations maliciously, in bad faith or with a view to personal gain, the whistle-blower will be subject to disciplinary action.

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 Chair of the Board for review.

7.0 Protection and Support

We will support staff who raise concerns in good faith, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Staff must not threaten or retaliate against those making disclosures in any way. Anyone shown to have been involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

Covering up someone else's wrongdoing will be regarded as a disciplinary offence. It is never appropriate to remain silent about a wrongdoing even if told to do so by someone in authority.

8.0 Concerns about Members of the School Board

If a concern surrounding a member of the School Board is received, then this will be treated in the same way as any other concern. The concern will be raised by the Headteacher with the Chair of Trustees who will decide how it should be dealt with.

If the concern is against the Chair of Trustees, 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 other members of the School Trustee Board how it should be dealt with.

9.0 External Disclosures

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for the reporting, investigating and resolving of any wrongdoing within the School.

It will very rarely be appropriate for a member of staff to report a matter externally before exhausting the internal process. Where a staff member does make such a report without engaging with the provision of this policy, disciplinary action may be considered.



It will not be regarded as appropriate for disclosures to be made to the media. Disciplinary action will be considered in such cases.

Where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff shall have a right of access to an external person/body. This may include (depending on the subject matter of the disclosure) HMRC, the Audit Commission, the Health and Safety Executive and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (where the disclosure relates to a child protection issue).

It should be noted that under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where a member of staff may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the individual reasonably believes:

- That exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- That the School would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- Where they believe they would be victimised by the School;
- Where the Secretary of State has ordered it.

10.0 Malicious Accusations

Malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.