

St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

In a caring Christian community together we love, learn, laugh and achieve

Whistle Blowing

We agree with the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life that 'whistle blowing' is the "raising of concerns about misconduct within an organisation". We actively encourage all school personnel to report any serious concerns about any aspect of the school or the conduct of its personnel or others acting on behalf of the school. We are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability.

We believe that where the concern relates to an individual's own employment the school's Grievance Policy must be used. However, if the concern relates to something which is against the school's policies, falls below standards of practice or amounts to improper conduct then the procedures in this policy must be used.

Aims

- To encourage all school personnel to report any serious concerns about any aspect of the school or the conduct of its personnel or others acting on behalf of the school.

Procedure

When a concern has been raised the following procedure will be followed:

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has:

- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel and visitors to the school are aware of and comply with this policy
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy
- responsibility for ensuring policies are made available to parents
- nominated a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Headteacher and to report back to the Governing Body
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- ensure all school personnel and volunteers are aware of and comply with this policy
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy

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Support for School Personnel

The Governing Body will provide support for both:

- the member of staff who has raised the concern
 - the member of staff against whom allegations have been made
- During the investigation the Governing Body will keep both parties informed of all progress.
 - No action will be taken against a member of staff if, after investigation, their concern has not been confirmed.
 - Disciplinary action will be taken if a concern is raised frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain.

Confidentiality

All raised concerns are investigated and every effort is made to ensure confidentiality for all parties.

Raising a Concern

• Stage 1

- All concerns should be made in person or in writing.
- The person raising the concern may wish to receive help from the Local Authority or from their trade union representative.
- At any future meeting the employee may be accompanied by a colleague or their trade union representative.

• Stage 2

- Within 10 working days the person with whom the concern has been registered acknowledges receipt in writing.
- The letter will state the following:
 - How the concern will be dealt with
 - How long it will take to provide a final response
 - Information on employee support services.

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Stage 3

- After initial enquiries have been conducted, a decision will be made if an investigation should take place.
- The investigation will be either:
 - an internal investigation
 - a referral to the police
 - a referral to the Council Auditor
 - an external independent enquiry.

Stage 4

- The employee will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation by the Governing Body
- The employee has the right to take their concern to an independent body if they feel it has not been addressed adequately.

Disclosures

- School personnel have a duty to the school not to disclose confidential information.
- However, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 this does not prevent an employee from seeking independent advice nor discussing their concern with the charity Public Concern.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the school website

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

Annually (or when the need arises) the effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be made to the Governors.