

ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY

RATIONALE

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which came into force in July 1999, workers who speak out against corruption and malpractice at work have statutory protection against victimisation and dismissal.

It is the duty of every member of staff to speak up about genuine concerns in relation to criminal activity, breach of a legal obligation (including negligence, breach of contract, breach of administrative law), miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or the environment, and the cover up of any of these in the workplace. It applies whether or not the information is confidential.

Whistleblowing is relevant to all organisations and all people, not just those few who are corrupt or criminal. This is because every business and every public body faces the risk of things going wrong or of unknowingly harbouring a corrupt individual. Where such a risk arises, usually the first people to realise or suspect the wrongdoing will be those who work in or with the organisation. Yet these people, who are best placed to sound the alarm or blow the whistle, often fear they have most to lose if they do.

“Unless culture, practice and the law indicate that it is safe and accepted for them to raise a genuine concern about corruption or illegality, workers will assume that they risk victimisation, losing their job or damaging their career.”

GORDON BORIE & GUY DEHN (Whistle Blowing The New Perspective)

A worker who blows the whistle will be protected if the disclosure is made in good faith and is about:

- _ **a criminal act**
- _ **a failure to comply with a legal obligation**
- _ **miscarriage of justice**
- _ **danger to health and safety**
- _ **any damage to the environment**
- _ **an attempt to cover up any of these.**

St Joseph's Primary School is committed to ensuring that any staff concerns of this nature will be taken seriously and investigated. A disclosure to the management will be protected if the member of staff has an honest and reasonable suspicion that the malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur. Staff who raise concerns reasonably and responsibly will not be penalised in any way.

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AIMS

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all practice in St Joseph's School is of the highest standard. To ensure this staff should adhere strictly to Aberdeen City Guidelines on:

- Child Protection
- Health & Safety
- Equality and Fairness
- Inclusion
- Racial Equality
- Additional Support Needs
- The delivery of the 3-18 curriculum
- Employees rights

If a member of staff is concerned that the rights of an individual or group are being infringed then they are obliged to disclose this internally to management in the first instance.

PROCEDURES

It is recognised that for some individuals, raising a concern under this procedure may be a daunting and difficult experience. An individual may choose to be accompanied or represented by their professional organisation at any stage of this procedure.

All reported incidents will be investigated.

All reports will be dealt with in confidence, with only staff who need to know, being informed.

The Senior Manager will establish and record the basis of the concerns that have been raised and establish what further actions are required. The individual raising the concern will be advised of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible, normally within two weeks of the date of their disclosure. Where a longer period is needed for investigation, the member of staff will be informed in writing.

Whistleblowing dos and don'ts

Do

- Keep calm
- Think about the risks and outcomes before you act
- Remember you are a witness, not a complainant

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Don't

- Forget there may be an innocent or good explanation
- Become a private detective
- Use a Whistleblowing procedure to pursue a personal grievance
- Expect thanks

Some other questions you may sensibly ask yourself are:

- If you've known of the risk for some time, why are you minded to raise the issue now?
- What do you think would be a satisfactory outcome?
- What obstacles are there to it?
- What is your motivation?

Before you blow the whistle, it's always a good idea to be very clear about the limits of your own responsibility.

- First, a whistleblower is a witness, not a complainant.
- Secondly, a likely consequence of not blowing the whistle could be that the Authorities say "Why didn't anybody tell us?" or "If only we had known ...". The treatment, then, should be to let the facts speak for themselves and allow those responsible to take an informed decision.

FURTHER ADVICE

You can get advice from:

Public Concerns at Work
Suite 306
16 Baldwin Gdns.
London EC 1N 7RJ

Tel: 0207 404 6609
Fax: 0207 404 6576

Email: whistle@pcaw.demon.co.uk