



Pauntley C of E Primary School

Whistleblowing Policy

School Mission Statement Stepping out boldly with God

'Jesus said, follow me.' Matthew 9.9

Pauntley is an inclusive and caring school of choice. We are child-focussed, with core values to enable us all to follow Jesus's example and so flourish and contribute to the local community and the world God loves.

This policy has been adopted by the school to enable members of staff to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about fraud, malpractice, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriage of justice, failure to comply with legal obligations, inappropriate behaviour or unethical conduct.

It does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and is not intended to have contractual effect. It is provided for guidance to **all members** of staff at the school and the school reserves the right to amend its content at any time. The existence of this policy does not prevent staff from raising concerns through their union if they so wish.

Whistle-blowing is intended to demonstrate that the School:

- Has a culture of safety for raising concerns, valuing staff and of reflective practice.
- Will not tolerate malpractice.
- Respects the confidentiality of employees raising concerns and will maintain confidentiality as 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 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 employees.

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/Safeguarding concerns
- Miscarriage of justice
- Danger to Health & Safety
- Damage to the environment
- Failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements
- Financial fraud or mismanagement
- Negligence
- Breach of school's policies including its Code of Conduct
- Conduct likely to damage the school's reputation
- 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. If Staff are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy they should seek advice from the Head or the Chair of Governors.

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, you should contact the Head.

Confidentiality

Employees who wish to raise a concern are entitled to have the matter treated confidentially, their name will not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator of malpractice unless deemed absolutely necessary. Employees need to express their concern in writing to the Head (Chair of Governors if it concerns the Head). If there is evidence of criminal activity the police will be informed. Allegations of a safeguarding nature should be raised directly with the Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL). Allegations regarding staff members need to be reported in line with the guidance in the school's safeguarding policies.

Anonymous Allegations

It is recognised that the purpose of a whistleblowing policy is to allow people to make protected disclosure with the protection being against any reprisals or victimisation for disclosures made honestly and in good faith.

Whistleblowing Procedure

1. The Head 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 Head will record the name of the employee but also indicate whether the individual wishes his or her identity to remain confidential, if possible and the nature of the concern. In some cases it will not be possible to maintain confidentiality and the Head 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.
2. The Head 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 Head will also aim to give the "whistleblower" an indication of how they propose to deal with the matter. An employee who is not satisfied that his/her concern is being properly dealt with will have a right to raise it in confidence with the Chair of Governors.
3. In most cases the Head and Chair of Governors will investigate any issue, occasionally a member of Senior Leadership (DSL) and/or LADO may be involved.
4. The school will aim to keep the member of staff informed of the progress and its likely timescale, the member of staff is required to treat any information about the investigation as strictly confidential.
5. 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.
6. Whilst the school cannot always guarantee the outcome a particular member of staff is seeking, the school will try to deal with the concern fairly and in an appropriate way. If a member of staff is not happy with the way in which his or her concern has been handled, he or she can raise it with one of the other key contacts outlined above.
7. There are no rights of appeal against any decisions taken under this procedure.

Support for whistleblower

It is understandable that the whistleblower may be 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. 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 unfavorable 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 Head immediately. If the matter is not remedied the member of staff should raise it formally with the Chair of Governors.

All Staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing.

External Procedures

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

- It is justified by exceptionally serious circumstances
- The school would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence

- He/she would be victimised by the school
- The Secretary of State has ordered it

Further Advice and Support

If you are in doubt you can seek advice from:

Public Concern at Work (Independent whistle blowing charity)

Helpline: 020 7404 6609

E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk

Website: www.pcaw.co.uk