



BLAKENEY, PILLOWELL AND WALMORE HILL SCHOOLS' FEDERATION WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Date of policy	Spring 2023
Review date	Spring 2026
Staff responsible	Head Teacher

Equalities Statement

Blakeney, Pillowell and Walmore Hill Schools' Federation provides an education for all, acknowledges the society in which we live, and is enriched by the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of its citizens. The school strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage, origins, faith, age, gender, sexuality and ability of members of the school community, everyone has the right to equal chances, is equally valued and treats one another with respect so that all pupils and staff are encouraged and supported in achieving their full potential. We provide pupils with opportunities to experience, understand and celebrate diversity, actively tackle all instances of unlawful discrimination and strive for equality of opportunity and good relationships to permeate all aspects of school life:

- attainment, progress and assessment
- behaviour, discipline and exclusion
- admission and attendance
- curriculum
- personal development and pastoral care
- teaching and learning
- working with parents / carers and communities
- staff recruitment and professional development

Safeguarding Statement

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) are responsible for Safeguarding in each school and there are Deputies who are responsible if the DSL is not on site. They liaise with the named Safeguarding Governor. We will follow the procedures for child protection drawn up by the Local Authority and the Governing Body.

If any person suspects that a child in the school may be the victim of abuse, they should not try to investigate, but should immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead about their concerns.

When investigating incidents or suspicions, the person responsible in the school for child protection works closely with social care, and with the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership. We handle all such cases with sensitivity, and we attach paramount importance to the interests of the child.

We require all adults who work in school to have their application vetted by the police, in order to check that there is no evidence of offences involving children or abuse. (DBS, Barred and Prohibition Checks).

All the adults in our school share responsibility for keeping our children safe. We may, on occasion, report concerns which, on investigation, prove unfounded. It is better to be safe than sorry and we trust that parents and carers, while they will naturally be upset, will nevertheless accept that the school acted in the child's best interests.

Accessibility Statement

We will strive to ensure that the ethos of the school is such that everyone is equally valued and treated with respect. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to experience, understand and value diversity.

All pupils should have access to an appropriate education that gives them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential, whatever their abilities and needs might be.

For further information, please see Safeguarding Policy.

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- encourage individuals affected to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated and that their confidentiality will be respected.
- let all staff know how to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing in school.
- set clear procedures for how the school will respond to such concerns.
- let all staff know the protection available to them if they raise a whistleblowing concern.
- assure staff that they will not be victimised for raising a legitimate concern through the steps set out in the policy even if they turn out to be mistaken (though vexatious or malicious concerns may be considered a disciplinary issue).

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. The policy applies to all employees or other workers who provide services to the school in any capacity including self-employed consultants or contractors who provide services on a personal basis and agency workers. It may also apply to volunteers in school; in addition, they are also covered by the Volunteers in School policy.

2. Legislation

This policy has been written in line with government guidance on whistleblowing. We also take into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998/2013](#).

3. Definition of whistleblowing

Whistleblowing covers concerns made that report wrongdoing that is "in the public interest". Examples of whistleblowing include (but aren't limited to):

- criminal offences, such as fraud or corruption.
- pupils' or staffs' health and safety being put in danger.
- failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement.
- breaches of financial management procedures.
- attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest.

- damage to the environment.

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above.

Not all concerns in school count as whistleblowing. For example, personal staff grievances such as bullying or harassment do not usually count as whistleblowing. If something affects a staff member as an individual, or relates to an individual employment contract, this is likely a grievance.

When staff have a concern, they should consider whether it would be better to follow our staff grievance or complaints procedures.

Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) has:

- further guidance on the difference between a whistleblowing concern and a grievance that staff may find useful if unsure.
- a free and confidential advice line.

4. Procedure for staff to raise a whistleblowing concern

4.1 When to raise a concern

Staff should consider the examples in section 3 when deciding whether their concern is of a whistleblowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

4.2 Who to report to

Staff should report their concern to the Head Teacher. If the concern is about the Head Teacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of governors.

4.3 How to raise the concern

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

5. Procedure for responding to a whistleblowing concern

5.1 Investigating the concern

When a concern is received by the Head Teacher (or chair of governors) - referred to from here as the 'recipient' - they will:

- meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative.
- get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting and record the information. If it becomes apparent the concern is not of a whistleblowing nature, the recipient should handle the concern in line with the appropriate policy/procedure.
- reiterate, at this meeting, that they are protected from any unfair treatment or risk of dismissal as a result of raising the concern. If the concern is found to be malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action may be taken (see section 6 of this policy).
- establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there is:

- the recipient should then arrange a further investigation into the matter, if appropriate. In some cases, they may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In other cases, they may need to report the matter to the police.
- the person who raised the concern should be informed of how the matter is being investigated and an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps.

5.2 Outcome of the investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred. The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, the Head Teacher, governors and other staff, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

Whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

6. Malicious or vexatious allegations

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns when they believe there to potentially be an issue. If an allegation is made in good faith, but the investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

7. Escalating concerns beyond the school

The school encourages staff to raise their concerns internally, in line with section 4 of this policy, but recognises that staff may feel the need to report concerns to an external body. A list of prescribed bodies to whom staff can raise concerns with is included [here](#).

The Protect advice line, linked to in section 3 of this policy, can also help staff when deciding whether to raise the concern to an external party.

8. Approval

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff grievance policy
- Complaints policy
- Child protection and Safeguarding policy