

## Wolverdene Special School

### Whistle-Blowing Policy – 2017

Produced By:	P Graham/C Rooke, Governors
Approved for School:	
Headteacher: P van Walwyk	.....(Signature)
Date: 24th January, 2017	
Approved by Governing Body:	
Chair/Deputy: L Bell	.....(Signature)
Date: 24th January, 2017	

#### **Introduction**

The School is committed to maintaining a culture of openness, accountability and integrity. We seek to ensure that employees feel secure in raising concerns about any activity which may harm individuals or undermine the status of the School.

#### **Background**

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 was established to protect workers who “blow the whistle” about malpractice or wrongdoings within an organisation. For schools this is particularly pertinent in relation to safeguarding children and to financial management.

If staff have serious concerns they should be able to raise them within the School, rather than outside, without fear of recrimination, such as denial of promotion or training opportunities, or, in extreme cases, dismissal. Concerns relating to an individual’s own employment should be addressed through the grievance procedure.

This Policy has been prepared using local authority guidance which has taken into account the views of staff and trade unions.

#### **Protected Disclosures**

In a School context, disclosures qualifying for protection are those when the member of staff believes in good faith one or more of the following matters is either happening now, took place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future:

- misuse of public money;
- abuse of pupils;
- corruption or unethical conduct;
- damage to the environment;

- a health and safety risk;
- breaking the law;
- concealment of any of the above.

The member of staff must have a reasonable belief that the information disclosed tends to show one or more of the offences or breaches listed above. The belief need not be correct – it might be discovered subsequently that the member of staff was in fact wrong – but the member of staff must show that he/she held the belief, and that it was a reasonable belief in the circumstances at the time of disclosure (guidance published by the erstwhile Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform). In other words, the member of staff should act in good faith, not for personal gain.

Free confidential advice from lawyers is available on [helpline@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:helpline@pcaw.co.uk). Further information can also be obtained from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration service on [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk).

### **Relationship to Other Policies**

This policy relates especially to the Child Protection Policy, the Safeguarding Policy and the Financial Expectations Policy.

### **Procedure**

Unless the Headteacher is the focus of the concern, the matter should be raised by the member of staff with him/her. If, however, the concern is about the Headteacher, then it should be taken up with the Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher will ensure that staff understand that:

- concerns may be raised orally or in writing and that they must ensure that they receive a satisfactory response;
- if concerns are put in writing (which is preferable), they provide the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates, names and locations), the reasons for the particular concern, details of evidence, and if appropriate details of witnesses;
- the earlier the concern is raised the easier it is to take action;
- they must always act in good faith, putting the safeguarding and welfare of children, and the status of the School above all other considerations;
- an employee raising a concern must ensure that the person with whom they raise it is fully aware that they are using this procedure;
- they have the right to discuss their concern in confidence with their trade union representative or work colleague and to invite their trade union representative or work colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns raised;
- every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality; however, in order to investigate the matter, information must be obtained and/or other members of staff questioned, therefore total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If criminal proceedings require that information is passed on it may become necessary to reveal the employee's identity. In such situations the employee will be consulted before this action is taken;
- in order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible

- malpractice or wrongdoing, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take;
- concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection or discrimination issues) will be referred for consideration under those procedures;
  - concerns will be acknowledged in writing within five working days and the initial enquiry will be undertaken, wherever possible, within ten working days. This will not involve a detailed investigation, but sufficient information will need to be gathered in order that a decision can be made as to whether further investigation will take place.

## **Investigation**

The matters raised may be:

- investigated through the disciplinary process;
- referred to the police or other relevant external organisation for investigation; or
- investigated under another procedure, such as child protection.

## **Harassment etc.**

The School will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) of a person who has raised a concern and will take appropriate action, within its power, to protect them. Staff who suffer harassment or victimisation should inform the individual with whom they raised their initial concern.

Staff raising an issue in good faith and in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 are protected from harassment, victimisation or any other detrimental treatment, even if their disclosure of any wrongdoing or malpractice is not substantiated after investigation.

The School expects that concerns will be raised in “good faith” and will treat abuse of this policy extremely seriously.

## **Chair of Governors**

The Chair of Governors will ensure that he/she is familiar with all the points that are listed above as the Headteacher’s responsibilities and is prepared for the eventuality of having to respond to a complaint.

## **Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Governing Body will monitor awareness of this policy as part of its regular surveys of staff and exit interviews.

## **Report**

Once resolved, any complaints and the action taken will be documented and an anonymised summary included in the Headteacher’s termly report to the Governing Body, with advice on any implications for policies and practice.

**Review**

This Whistle-Blowing Policy will be reviewed annually.

**Record of Reviews**

<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Headteacher Signature</b>	<b>Chair/Deputy Chair Signature</b>
24/01/2018			