

Salendine Nook High School (Academy)

Financial Management Manual

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14. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

INDEPENDENT REPORTING OF CONCERNS AT WORK

Introduction

Our employees will often be the first to notice if there is something seriously wrong within their workplace. Sometimes it may seem difficult to speak up because of feelings of disloyalty, or because of a fear of harassment or victimisation.

We expect the highest standards of behaviour and all employees have a responsibility to voice any concerns they have, normally with their manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team

This Whistleblowing procedure is independent and confidential. It can be anonymous if you wish. We will make sure that you will not be victimised or suffer disadvantage if you report your genuine concerns.

It allows employees to bring to the attention of those who can make a difference any practice which they believe or suspect:

- is unlawful;
- is a serious breach of the school's policies, procedures and rules (for example, the school's financial procedures);
- falls substantially below established standards of practice;
- amounts to improper conduct.

It is difficult to come up with a complete list of issues which might cause concern, but you should report known or strongly suspected fraud, corruption, bribery, theft or financial irregularities; the physical, mental or sexual abuse of clients; unfair discrimination; abuse of power; dangerous practices; criminal conduct; serious damage to the environment; negligence; unprofessional behaviour and evasion of statutory responsibilities.

The malpractice might be carried out by school employees, contractors, consultants, or council staff.

This procedure is not to be used if you are generally dissatisfied at work or as a replacement to your existing employment rights with the school. If you make any allegations maliciously or for personal gain, you may be disciplined.

This policy is in line with the council policy.

How to raise a concern

a) Through your manager

Normally you should first speak to your immediate manager. If you feel that you can't do this – for example if you believe that they are involved – then you should speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

b) Through your trade union

You may find it helpful at this stage to contact your trade union representative or someone who you trust to advocate on your behalf.

c) Through the Whistleblowing route

If you do not feel able to contact any of these people you should call the council's Whistleblowing answerphone – ring 860 5030 or 01484 225030 or email whistleblowing@kirklees.gov.uk

You should give as much information as you can, including names, dates, places, history and why you are concerned. You are encouraged, but not required, to leave your name and contact details – it is much easier to investigate a concern if we can speak to you directly and confidentially.

All messages on the answerphone and email will be heard and seen only by the council's Corporate Customer Standards team. They will then review all messages confidentially, and contact either the Head of Audit and Risk or the Head of HR.

How your concerns will be dealt with

All allegations will be investigated: how and by whom depends on how serious they are and who they involve. The investigation may be handled internally, or referred to an external agency such as the police or the council's external auditor.

If you raise your concerns under this policy then we will write to you within 10 working days saying:

- what we intend to do;
- how long we think this will take;
- whether any more information is required from you.

We will let you know the outcome of the investigation, so that you can see that the matter has been properly addressed.

Raising your concerns elsewhere

This Whistleblowing policy has been drawn up so that you can have your concerns dealt with properly, independently and confidentially by the school, but if you have no faith in this process, then you may consider contacting:

- the police – phone 101 from any phone (9 then 101 from school phones);

- the council's external auditor (currently the Audit Commission at www.audit-commission.gov.uk) or phone 0845 052 2646 (the Audit Commission's own Whistleblowers' Hotline);
- Public Concern at Work – an independent authority on whistleblowing at www.pcaw.co.uk or phone 020 7404 6609

School employees have a responsibility not to undertake any action which might bring the school into disrepute. If you do decide to report your concerns outside the school, you must ensure that you have a good reason for doing so and you must not disclose confidential information.