

Feltham Hill Infant & Nursery School

Whistleblowing Policy

February 2019

The Whistleblowing Policy supports an ethos of openness, probity and accountability. It is displayed in the staffroom to encourage staff to be open.

It ensures protection to any person who reports anything considered to be “wrong” in the conduct of all School Staff and Governors.

*Prepared by: Headteacher
Discussed with: Senior Leadership Team
Agreed with: All school staff (Feb 2019)
Agreed with Governors (Feb 2019)
To be Reviewed and updated: Feb 2021*

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives employees certain protection against unfair dismissal as a result of “whistle-blowing” to support staff who wish to raise serious concerns.

Whistleblowing is likely to always to be a sensitive and difficult issue, not least for the whistle-blower. It will occur where more normal reporting procedures have failed.

Where possible such concerns should be raised within the school to enable confidential disclosure to the Headteacher or Chair of governors in any individual case.

Aims of the policy

- To enable staff to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice.
- To provide avenues for the concerns to be reported and ensure there is a response.
- To ensure staff are not prejudiced and are protected from possible reprisals or victimisation.

Inappropriate Conduct

Staff need to report concerns where there is:

- a child protection issue
- a danger to health and safety
- a criminal offence of any type including theft or fraud
- a breach of any legal obligation, including those under statute, common law and administrative law
- damage to the environment
- a miscarriage of justice
- a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct
- a breach of proper accounting practices
- a concealing of information which shows any of the above matters

Before Formal Reporting

Staff need to feel supported by the Headteacher and governors so that they are confident to raise serious concerns.

- In the first instance there will be an informal discussion with the staff member raising the concern with the Headteacher, Chair of governors or another governor as appropriate.
- The purpose of this discussion would be for the staff member to draw attention to the concern.
- They will seek advice from the Headteacher, Chair or governor.
- The staff member may be assured from this informal meeting that the concerns will be addressed without formal reporting procedures.
- The staff member maybe advised to follow the formal reporting procedures and assured that they will be guided and supported.
- They will be advised to put the concern formally in writing.

- On some occasions the staff member will feel dissatisfied with the outcome from the informal meeting and choose to 'whistle blow' their concern.

Procedures for Formal Reporting

Following the informal meeting the staff member may follow formal procedures.

- The staff member will write the allegation in a letter marked confidential.
- The letter must outline the concern and request a confidential meeting for further information.
- There will be a meeting where minutes will be taken.
- In the meeting the staff member will be reassured that the matter will be investigated.
- The staff member will be reassured of the confidential reporting procedure and protection to themselves.
- The staff member may also want to report their concerns to their Union Representative.
- If this is not appropriate then the concern should be reported to another Governor or Deputy Director of Adult & Children's Services (*Michael Marks*).

Procedures for Investigating

All serious concerns will be investigated.

- The Headteacher and Chair of governors will investigate the matter raised.
- If this is not appropriate another governor will be involved.
- The staff member named in the concern will be informed.
- They will consider whether the complaint is of a nature to be dealt with under the procedure or is in truth, for example, a grievance and should be dealt with on that basis.
- All staff members concerned or involved will be interviewed to investigate the matter further as appropriate.
- There may be other professional advice needed to further investigate the concern.
- A child protection concern would be reported immediately to the Lead Officer for child protection (*Martin Forshaw*).
- A concern will be reported to the police where necessary.
- The staff member who raised the concern will be informed of the findings from the investigation.

Procedures for Recording

There must be clear, concise and confidential records of the concern:

- The staff member who submitted the confidential disclosure must sign a written statement.
- The staff member named in the concern must sign a statement.
- All other staff members interviewed must sign witness statements.
- There must be a written log of all meetings and procedures.
- The Headteacher, Chair of governors or another governor investigating must set up a confidential file for the disclosure, minutes and all papers received or generated.

- All meetings must be recorded.
- The Headteacher, Chair of governors or governor investigating must complete a final written report
- The Report will have a summary of the original confidential disclosure and evidence from the investigation.
- The Report will conclude findings related to the original concern.
- The Report will include relevant actions from the findings.
- The Report will be kept in a Whistleblowing file in a locked drawer.

Following Findings

The Headteacher, Chair of governors or governor investigating will:

- Inform the staff member named in the concern.
- Take appropriate action as required referring to the Employment Rights Act 1996.
- Refer the findings to an appropriate authority where necessary.
- Inform the staff member who made the confidential disclosure of the outcomes.
- Reassure that staff member that there will be no reprisals against them.
- Reassure that staff member that there will be no record on their personal file.
- Take disciplinary action if the concern was raised for personal gain or maliciously.

Relevant Information

- **Headteacher** - Angela White 0208 890 3814
head@fhi.hounslow.sch.uk
- **Chair of Governors** - Sarah Pearce
office@fhi.hounslow.sch.uk
- **Head of Operational Child Protection & Safeguarding**
martin.forshaw@hounslow.gov.uk
- **Deputy Director Children & Adult Services** - Michael Marks 020 8583 2903
michael.marks@hounslow.gov.uk
- **LA HR Advisor** - Wendy Phipps 020 8583 2869
wendy.phipps@hounslow.gov.uk
- **Finance Manager** - Alex Taylor 020 8583 2836
alex.taylor@hounslow.gov.uk
- **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 & Employment Rights Act 1996** visit
Office of Public Sector Information website: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk>

Other Relevant Policies

- **Capability**
- **Child Protection & Safeguarding**
- **Complaints**
- **Finance**
- **Health & Safety**
- **Pay including Performance Management**
- **Staff Code of Conduct, Discipline & Grievance**