



Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

The staff and governors of Griffe Field Primary School seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. In the event that members of school staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, Griffe Field Primary School has established the following whistleblowing policy, or code of practice, which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Throughout this policy, the term whistleblower denotes the person raising the concern or making the complaint. It is not meant in a pejorative sense and is entirely consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies published in May 1996.

Griffe Field Primary School is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. Griffe Field Primary School recognises that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the school. Griffe Field Primary School is committed to creating a climate of trust and openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved.

The provisions of this policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety and not matters of more general grievance.

When might the whistleblowing policy apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which Griffe Field Primary School considers should be dealt with under this policy includes:

- Manipulation of accounting records and finances
- Inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- Decision making for personal gain
- Any criminal activity
- Abuse of position
- Child protection/or safeguarding
- Fraud and deceit
- Serious breaches of school procedures which may advantage a particular party (for example tampering with tender documentation, failure to register a personal interest)
- The deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

What action should the whistleblower take?

Griffe Field Primary School encourages the whistleblower to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and

authority the opportunity to right the wrong and give an explanation for the behaviour or activity.

Griffe Field Primary School has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the whistleblower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Name and Position contact details-

Mrs E. Mitchell Headteacher, Griffe Field Primary School 01332 515718

Responsible Officer

Mr D Yazdani Chair of Governors, c/o Griffe Field Primary School 01332 515718

Audit Manager

Jacinta Fru, Jacinta.fru@centralmidlandsaudit.co.uk 01332 643283

The whistleblower may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in written form marked private and confidential and addressed to one of the above named individuals.

How will the matter be progressed?

The individual in receipt of the information or allegation will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties eg. other members of school staff, legal or personnel advisors, the police, the Department for Education, the Council.

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigating officer, possible in conjunction with the governing body, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third party referral such as the police.

The whistleblower will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the governing body and the Council.

Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible Griffe Field Primary School seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistleblower and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals. Griffe Field will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the whistleblower or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

Raising unfounded malicious concerns

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious unfounded concerns or attempt discredit colleagues, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances.

Conclusion

Existing good practice within Griffe Field Primary School in terms of its systems of internal control both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the school operates ensures that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur. This whistleblowing policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the school.

Headteacher	Emma Mitchell	Chair of Governors	M
Policy Approved/Written		November 2017	
Review every 3 years			
Policy Reviewed		February 2021	

Policy Reviewed	
Policy Reviewed	

Appendix 1

Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right

Reasons for whistle blowing:

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from whistle blowing:

- Starting a chain of events which spirals.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern:

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- Approach your immediate manager, Head Teacher, or the Designated Child Safeguarding Officer.
- If your concern is about your immediate manager/Head Teacher, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school contact The Local Authority
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest.
- You should then put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next?

You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries. Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.

No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.

Allegations made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain will be seen in a different light and disciplinary action may be taken.

Self reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, or perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most situations, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager, HR department and/or your professional trade union.