



Sacred Heart Primary School

Whistleblowing Policy

This policy was adopted:	Autumn 2022
This policy will be reviewed again:	Autumn 2024
Governor Committee Responsibility:	FGB
Statutory policy	Yes
Source:	Governing Body



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Whistleblowing Policy

1 Introduction

Whistleblowing, also known as ‘public interest disclosure’, can be defined as:
“the disclosure by an employee or professional of confidential information which relates to some danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct connected with the work place, be it of the employee or his/her fellow employees”

(Public Concern at Work Guidelines 1997)

Employees who whistleblow are afforded statutory protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA). PIDA protects employees against victimisation if they make a protected disclosure (within the meaning of the Act) and/or speak out about concerns regarding conduct or practice within the school which is potentially illegal, corrupt, improper, unsafe or unethical, or which amounts to malpractice.

Sacred Heart is a Catholic school, founded by and forming part of the Catholic Church. In addition to the Church’s funds which established the school, it is sustained in its mission by receipt of public funds. Accordingly, it is accountable to the Catholic community of which it is a part and which provided the school and to the public whose funds it expends.

The governors of the school are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect employees and others with whom we deal, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the school’s work, to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

This policy makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage. This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns, within the school in the first instance, so that it is not necessary to resort to outside agencies.

If the ‘public interest disclosure’, relates to fraud then the procedures set out in the school’s Theft and Fraud Prevention Policy are adhered to in relation to investigating the allegation.

2 Aims and Scope of this Policy

There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment.

This policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- conduct which is an offence, a breach of the law, or contrary to Church teaching
- disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public, as well as other employees
- damage to the environment
- the unauthorised use of public or Church funds



- possible fraud and corruption
- abuse of students
- mistreatment of any person
- sexual, physical or emotional abuse of members of staff or pupils
- racist incidents, harassment or acts, or any other discriminatory behaviour
- other unethical or immoral conduct
- any attempt to prevent the disclosure of any of the above

Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees or governors of the school, or others acting on behalf of the school, can be reported under this policy. This may be something that makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the values, beliefs and standards to which the school subscribes; is against the school's trust deed or instrument of government or policies; falls below established standards of practice; or amounts to improper conduct.

This policy applies to all school staff including full and part time, casual, temporary, substitute staff and to individuals undertaking work experience in the school. It should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and Theft and Fraud Prevention Policy.

3 Safeguards

The school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith and in accordance with the PIDA.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence you or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that might affect you.

4 Confidentiality

The governors recognise that members of staff may wish to raise concerns in confidence. The board will take every effort to protect the identity of members of staff who raise a concern and do not want their name disclosed.

However, any investigation into the concern could reveal the source of the information; and statements may be required from the member of staff as part of the evidence, which would be seen by all parties involved. If the investigation leads to prosecution the whistle-blower is likely to be called in to give evidence in court.

Members of staff who raise concerns also have a duty to observe this confidentiality and must not discuss the action they are taking with other school employees or governors.

5 Anonymous Allegations

You are encouraged to put your name to your allegation wherever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the governing board. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised
- the credibility of the concern
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources



Untrue and Malicious/Vexatious Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation maliciously and/or vexatiously, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

6 Allegations Concerning Child Protection Issues

If a member of staff raises a concern related to a child protection issue, the headteacher or chair of governors (if the concern is about the headteacher) should urgently consult the LEA officer designated to lead on child protection. However, in relation to child protection issues, it is open to the member of staff to make a direct referral to the social services designated manager either before raising their concern with the governing body or where the headteacher or chair of governors fails to do so after raising their concern and the member of staff remains concerned about the situation.

7 How to Raise a Concern

If you reasonably believe that you have discovered serious malpractice within the school, you should raise these concerns with your line manager. However, if, for whatever reason, this is not possible or appropriate, you should contact the headteacher.

You will be given the opportunity to discuss your suspicions and an appropriate person will be designated as investigating officer, who will arrange for an investigation to take place.

If you suspect that the headteacher may be involved in the malpractice, then you should contact the chair of the governing body. If you also suspect involvement by the chair, then you should contact the Diocesan Director of Education.

Within ten working days of your initial meeting, the investigating officer will write to confirm the details of your concern and that an investigation will take place. Throughout the investigation, you will be kept informed of progress and you will normally be advised of the eventual outcome, subject to third party rights. All correspondence will be addressed to your home. If a meeting is needed, it may be arranged off site if you wish, and a union representative or a friend may accompany you. Although records will need to be kept as the enquiries progress, these will be of an anonymous nature.

There can be no prescribed time limits for completion of the investigative process, but it will be in the interests of all concerned if the issue is resolved without delay. The investigating officer may at any time bring the matter to the attention of the chair of governors, the Diocese Director of Education and/or the LA, the Police, or other persons they deem appropriate.

If you have any complaint about the way in which the investigation is being handled, then you should raise this with the designated investigating officer, in the first instance. If the complaint remains unresolved, then you may contact the Diocesan Director of Education with your concerns.

When the investigation is complete, a report will be presented to the governing body, which will decide upon the appropriate course of action. Subject to any relevant legal constraints, you will be informed of the action to be taken. If you do not agree with the outcome, then



you will have seven days in which to make your concerns known to the governing body, via the chair.

If you remain dissatisfied with the response from the governing body or the Diocese, then you may consider contacting the Secretary for Education, who has the power to intervene if the governing body appears to be acting unreasonably. You should be aware, however, that this course of action could have serious implications for the school.

At no stage should you contact the media without the written permission of the chair of the governing body. Such action would be a breach of confidentiality and could result in disciplinary proceedings against you.

Updated 28.11.22

Ratified 14.12.22



Sacred Heart Primary School

List of Named Persons (Whistleblowing Reporting)

It is the school's duty to make all governors, school employees, agency staff, and volunteers aware of the whistleblowing policy, which has been reviewed and approved by the full governing body.

It is also the school's duty to ensure that you have read and understood the whistleblowing policy, and that you are aware of the procedures in place in the event you need to raise concerns about what is happening at work - for example, a possible danger to the public or colleagues, illegal practice, misconduct, persistent breaches of regulations, or financial malpractice.

The following people have been designated as the named persons to whom you should report your concerns:

In the first instance, contact the following:

Name	Position	Contact Details
Mrs Brenda Green	Headteacher	head@sacredheart.richmond.sch.uk 0208 977 6591

Should you feel unhappy about the way your concerns have been handled and would like to take the matter further, contact one of the following people:

Name	Position	Contact Details
Jo Faulkner	Chair of Governors	chair@sacredheart.richmond.sch.uk 0208 977 6591
	Vice Chair of Governors	vicechair@sacredheart.richmond.sch.uk 0208 977 6591
Archdiocese of Westminster	Peter Sweeney Director of Education	020 7798 9005
Secretary of State for Education	Central Government	020 7925 5000

Link Governor:

Name	Position	Contact Details
Ms Katherine Conlon	Link Governor for Whistleblowing	info@sacredheart.richmond.sch.uk 0208 977 6591



Sacred Heart Primary School

Whistleblowing Declaration Form

It is the school’s duty to make all governors, school employees, agency staff, and volunteers aware of the whistleblowing policy, which has been reviewed and approved by the full governing body.

It is also the school’s duty to ensure that you have read and understood the whistleblowing policy, and that you are aware of the procedures in place in the event you need to raise concerns about what is happening at work - for example, a possible danger to the public or colleagues, illegal practice, misconduct, persistent breaches of regulations, or financial malpractice.

To ensure the school complies with its duties, you are required to sign this declaration form. By signing this form, you agree that you have read and understood the whistleblowing policy and that you are aware of the procedures in place should you need to raise concerns about what is happening at work.

I hereby certify that I have read and understood the school’s Whistleblowing Policy and am aware of the procedures in place should I need to raise concerns about irregularities and/or unlawful activity at work.

Position (eg, governor, headteacher, etc):.....

Name of individual or company:.....

Signature:.....Date:.....

(This form must be kept by the school and available for inspection by the LA on request.)