

# Whistleblowing Policy at St. Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Skelmersdale.

**Confidential Helpline:** 01772 262500

## What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns **within** the school rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside. Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within any organisation. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the school.

## Our Commitment

St. Edmund's is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the school's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

## Who Does the Policy Apply to?

The policy applies to all employees, (including those designated as casual hours, temporary, agency, authorised volunteers or work experience), and those contractors working for the school or on the school premises, for example, agency staff, builders, drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the council in their own premises, for example, care homes.

This policy has been discussed with the relevant trade unions and professional organisations and has their support.

Separate arrangements are being made for employees who work in schools.

## The Aims of the Policy are:

- To provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- To ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.
- To reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a disclosure in good faith.

## What Types of Concern are Covered?

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- 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 funds
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual or physical abuse of clients
- Other unethical conduct

NB. Other procedures are available to employees eg the Grievance procedure which relate to complaints about your own employment. This policy also does not replace other corporate complaints procedures which are for public use.

## Safeguards and Victimisation

Governors recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you are providing a service.

The Governors 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.

## Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

This policy encourages you however to put your name to your concern whenever possible.

Please note that:

- Staff must disclose the information in good faith.
- Staff must believe it to be substantially true.
- Staff must **not** act maliciously or make false allegations.
- Staff must **not** seek any personal gain.

## How to Raise a Concern

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns either verbally or in writing with your immediate supervisor/ manager. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved you should approach a more senior level of management within your Directorate/DSO.

County Council Financial Regulations require that the County Treasurer shall be notified of all financial or accounting irregularities or suspected irregularities. This policy does not supersede that requirement, it does in fact provide the opportunity to raise concerns directly to the County Treasurer's internal audit staff through the helpline.

If you wish to make a confidential call please ring the dedicated Whistleblowing number:

**01772 262500**