

Winwick Church of England Primary School



Whistleblowing Policy

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Introduction

The staff and governors of Winwick CE Primary School seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard to high standards of conduct and integrity.

In the event that members of staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of activities that give cause for concern, this policy provides a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and any investigation to be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

We are committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treat these issues seriously. We are 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.

When might the policy apply?

- Manipulation of accounting records and finances
- Inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- Decision making for personal gain
- Any criminal activity
- Abuse of position
- Fraud and deceit
- Serious breaches of school procedures
- Dangerous procedures or practice risking Health and Safety, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Practice which falls below established standards or practice
- Action which is contrary to the code of conduct for employees
- Sexual or physical abuse of pupils or others
- Other unethical conduct

What action should the whistleblower take?

As a first step, an employee should normally raise concerns with their immediate line manager. However, if the concern is about their line manager, they should contact the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

If an employee's concern is about the Headteacher, he or she should contact the Chair of Governors (Jackie Neal - jneal@winwickprimary.co.uk)

If the concern involves physical or sexual abuse of children, the employee should report it immediately to the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection but again if this is against the Headteacher, they must report it direct to the Chair of Governors.

Once an employee is certain that bad practice exists the following action should be considered:

- Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing
- An employee may take another person with them as a witness or for support
- The employee should take to the meeting, if possible, dated and signed written supporting statements from anyone who can confirm the allegations.

Although employees are not expected to prove beyond reasonable doubt the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for their concern.

How will the matter be progressed?

There will be a preliminary investigation which will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. In the case of physical or sexual abuse of children, the matter will be referred to the police and the LA Children's Safeguarding Unit (LADO).

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigators will consider how best to report the findings and what action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third-party referral such as the police.

Employees may ask their trade union representative to advise them, or be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns they have raised.

Employees will not be victimised, disciplined or disadvantaged in any way for raising genuine concerns. All employees have legal protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. However, this does not apply where allegations are found to be malicious or deliberately false. Such behaviour will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Employees also have the right to raise matters of concern under the Grievance Procedure.

Contact the LADO

- <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/local-authority-designated-officer-lado>
- Email: LADO@warrington.gov.uk or call 01925 442079

Confidentiality

- Wherever possible, we will seek to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistleblower and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals.
- Winwick CE Primary 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 if appropriate.
- The investigators and whistleblower should also respect the confidentiality of the accused until there has been a satisfactory conclusion to the matter.

This policy should also be considered alongside the Warrington Borough Council Whistleblowing Procedure.