

Shorne Church of England Primary School

(A member of the Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust)



Whistle-blowing Policy

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Shorne Church of England Primary School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage staff and others who have any concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice them. We realise that in some instances concerns may need to be expressed confidentially.

School employees and others working in the school must recognise their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the senior leadership team and/or, in relevant cases, other agencies. This procedure encourages staff and others to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within school and the Trust, rather than ignoring a problem or raising the matter inappropriately elsewhere. The procedure applies to all staff, agency workers and supply staff and those contractors working on the premises, for example cleaners, builders and volunteers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract to the school or Trust in their own premises.

We recognise that whistle-blowing may engender feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or that staff may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in the behaviour that is causing concern continuing.

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

Other Complaints Procedures

This procedure is separate from the school Complaints Procedure and other statutory reporting procedures. Child Protection issues should be reported using the specific guidelines laid out in that policy. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affects an individual.

Behaviour that may cause concern

- conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely occur, the result of which means that the school or Trust fails to comply with a legal obligation. For example, unauthorised use of public funds, possible fraud or corruption, verbal, sexual or physical abuse, or other unethical conduct, discrimination of any kind and waste/frivolous expenditure
- past, current or likely miscarriages of justice
- past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as to other employees
- past, current or likely damage to the environment

Reasons for whistle-blowing

Every 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 themselves

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

- ideally, you should voice any concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you are able with your line manager. 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
- if your concern is about your immediate line manager you should approach the Headteacher
- if your concern is about the headteacher, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the Chair of Governors or the CEO of the Trust
- make sure that you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest
- ideally you should 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
- malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence

Anonymous Allegations

An 'originator' should always consider putting his or her name to the allegation, as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those that are attributed to a named individual, and only where the source of an allegation is named can the details be checked fully, and you can be informed of progress with, or the outcomes of, any investigation. **However, this is not a requirement, and all allegations, whether from a named or an anonymous source, will be considered with equal seriousness.** Any person receiving an anonymous 'whistleblowing' complaint must always alert the Chair of Governors or the CEO of the Trust.

Confidentiality

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality, for instance if you are required to come forward as a witness.

Self-reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their own professional competence.

Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with the headteacher thereby enabling professional and personal support to be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.