

Whistle Blowing Policy

Last amended 23.08.19 by Heather Watson

**Reviewed by Chris Stafford, COO, June 2019
Reviewed by Karen Dadds, DSL, August 2019**

Ratified by Trustees 12.06.19

Next review date June 2021

This policy has been reviewed in line with the 8 principles set out in the Single Equality Policy and an initial screening Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.

Within this policy the term Headteacher refers to the Headteacher of the school and the term CEO refers to the CEO of the Twynham Learning Multi-Academy Trust (the Trust).

The governors of the Trust are charity trustees and company directors and for the purpose of this policy these terms are interchangeable.

This policy reflects the legislation at the time that it was last reviewed. Any changes in legislation will take precedence over anything printed in this policy.

Purpose

The Trust is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, the Trust wishes to encourage any person with a serious concern about a potential breach of these standards within the Trust to raise that concern and shall ensure that the concern is investigated in a structured way.

The Trust wishes to ensure that any concern will be investigated and dealt with swiftly, objectively and without any fear of repercussions for the individual raising the concern. This policy sets out the process by which this will be achieved.

Should it be shown that there has been a breach of standards; the consequences of such a breach will be dealt with in line with other school policies (e.g. Discipline).

Scope

The policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as:

- Fraud, corruption or unauthorised use of public money
- Mistreatment of students
- An unlawful act
- Any danger to health and safety
- Environmental damage (e.g. by pollution)
- Abuse of position for personal gain
- Deliberate failure to comply with any policy, code of practice, law or regulation, or any other procedures agreed by the local authority or Board of Trustees
- A failure to meet appropriate professional standards
- Discrimination of any form (e.g. by race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, sex, sexuality)

This policy applies to all members of staff, Trustees, governors, contractors, suppliers and individuals providing services to the Trust.

The Trust Executive Team, Headteachers and members of the Leadership Teams in individual schools are responsible for making all relevant people aware of this procedure.

Raising Concerns

Where the concerns are about **safeguarding children or young people**, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be notified (see section on Safeguarding Children and Young People within this policy.)

Concerns should be raised in the first instance, in writing, with an immediate line manager, the Headteacher or another member of the Leadership Team, the Trust DSL, the CEO or the Chair of Trustees (depending on the seriousness and sensitivity of the matter and who is suspected of the wrongdoing).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy where instances of fraud, theft or irregularity are suspected.

Employees are encouraged to contact their Trade Union representative for support and guidance on how to raise a concern. Where a concern relates to possible criminal activity, employees can raise matters directly with the police. See also section on Independent Advice within this policy.

Any person raising a concern that they honestly believe to be true will be protected by the Trust (e.g. from any harassment, victimisation or bullying) as required by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The Trust will treat the matter confidentially and will undertake the investigation in a sensitive way such that the identity of the person raising the concern is protected. Individuals should be encouraged not to raise concerns anonymously as, without sufficient access to information, it may not be possible for the Trust to effectively undertake the investigation.

Should an investigation conclude that an individual made an allegation knowing it to be false; the Trust will take disciplinary action in accordance with the Trust's Discipline Policy.

Investigation of Concerns

The person to whom the concern is first raised will make initial enquiries to determine whether an investigation is merited.

Should the recommendation resulting from these initial enquiries be that a formal investigation is appropriate, then the matter should be raised with the Headteacher, CEO or Chair of Trustees, as appropriate.

The Headteacher, CEO or Chair of Trustees will appoint an independent team of senior managers, governors and/or external advisors as appropriate to undertake a thorough investigation. Throughout all the enquiries and the investigation, the main concern will be to put the interests of the public and particularly students first.

In some circumstances it may also be felt appropriate to refer the matter to other individuals or agencies, such as:

- the police
- other agencies (for example, if the concern involves the abuse of children or vulnerable adults it may be referred to the Executive Director of Health and Social Care)
- an external auditor or
- an independent investigator

It may be possible to settle some concerns without carrying out an investigation. In some circumstances, it may also be necessary to take urgent action, before carrying out a formal investigation.

Within 10 working days of receiving a concern, the individual dealing with the matter will acknowledge in writing that the concern has been received and will explain how the matter is being dealt with.

The Trust will provide the individual raising a concern with feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation. Details of any concerns raised will be kept confidential by the Trust (unless they are found to be malicious and lead to disciplinary procedures) but will not be placed on personal files.

Policy Implementation

Should an individual not be satisfied by actions taken to address a particular concern, they should raise this in the first instance with the CEO or Chair of Trustees who will need to take appropriate action to ensure that the matter is being investigated in a thorough and appropriate way.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

All employees have a duty to report concerns about the safety and welfare of students. Concerns about any of the following should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- physical abuse of a student
- sexual abuse of a student
- emotional abuse of a student
- neglect of a student
- an intimate or improper relationship between an adult and a student

The DSL at Twynham School is Karen Dadds

The DSL at The Grange School is Liz Garman

The DSL at Twynham Primary School is Jon Chapple

The DSLs at Stourfield Junior School are Michelle Changchao and Emma Rawson

The DSL at Stourfield Infant School is Emma Foyle

The DSL at Christchurch Junior School is Simon Adorian

Independent advice

Independent advice or support can be obtained from an organisation called Public Concern at Work. Public Concern at Work is a charity and is an independent authority which seeks to ensure that concerns about malpractice are properly raised and addressed in the workplace.

Their address is:

Public Concern at Work
The Green House
244-254 Cambridge Heath Road
London E2 9DA

Phone: 020 3117 2520

E-mail: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk

Website: www.pcaw.org.uk

Equality Impact Assessment – Initial Screening Record

1. What policy is being reviewed? Whistle Blowing Policy

2. Upon whom will this impact? All associated with Twynham Learning

3. How would the work impact upon groups; are they included and considered?

The Equality Strands	Negative impact	Positive impact	No impact
Minority ethnic groups			√
Gender			√
Disability			√
Religion, faith or belief			√
Sexual orientation			√
Transgender			√
Age <small>(N/A to pre-school and school children)</small>			√
Rurality			√

4. Does data inform this work, research and/or consultation, and has it been broken down by the equality strands?

	NO	YES	Uncertain
Minority ethnic groups	√		
Gender	√		
Disability	√		
Religion, Faith or belief	√		
Sexual Orientation	√		
Transgender	√		
Age	√		
Rurality	√		

Does the initial screening highlight potential issues that may be illegal? NO

Further comments:-

Do you consider that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required? NO

Initial screening carried out by members of Resources Committee June 2014
and reviewed by Karen Dadds August 2019

Comment by CEO: