



St Hilary School Whistle-Blowing Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Governors and staff of St. Hilary School seek to carry out all aspects of the school business and activity with full regard to high standards of conduct and integrity. In the event that governors, school staff, parents or the school community at large become aware of activities, which give cause for concern, we have established the following “Whistle-blowing Policy”. This acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially, and provides for thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter, in order to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Throughout this policy, the term “whistle-blower” denotes the person raising the concern or making the complaint. It is not meant in a pejorative sense and is entirely consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the *Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies*, published in May 1996.

St. Hilary School is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. We recognise that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and have therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment and also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the School.

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 it will be appropriately considered and resolved.

The provisions of this policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety, and not matters of a more general grievance, which would be dealt with through the School Complaints Policy.

WHEN MIGHT THE WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY APPLY?

The type of activity or behaviour which we consider should be dealt with under this policy includes:

- criminal activity;
- child protection and/or safeguarding concerns (in line with the school child protection policy and safeguarding arrangements);
- miscarriages of justice;

- danger to health and safety;
- damage to the environment;
- failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
- financial fraud or mismanagement;
- negligence;
- breach of the school's internal policies and procedures including its Code of Conduct;
- conduct likely to damage the School's reputation;
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

WHAT ACTION SHOULD THE WHISTLEBLOWER TAKE?

The school recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

St Hilary School encourages the whistleblower to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those Governors and school staff in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and give an explanation for the behaviour or activity. We have designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the whistleblower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter:

- Chair of Governors (Peter Scrase, Whistle blowing governor)
- Head Teacher
- Child protection officer
- Chair of the Personnel Committee
- Chair of the Finance Committee

The whistleblower may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone, or in written form marked 'private and confidential' and addressed to one of the above named individuals. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected whenever possible.

HOW WILL THE MATTER PROGRESS?

The individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation (the investigating officer/s) will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice, or assistance.

Records will be kept of actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigating officer(s), possibly in conjunction with the Governing Body, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third party referral, such as the Police. The whistleblower will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the Governing Body.

If the whistleblower is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter, or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the investigating officer(s) and/or the Governing Body.

RESPECTING CONFIDENTIALITY

Wherever possible, St. Hilary School seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistleblower and will, as far as possible, protect him/her from reprisals. We 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 appropriate to the circumstances.

RAISING UNFOUNDED MALICIOUS CONCERNS

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns, with the knowledge that they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence.

EXTERNAL BODIES

This policy is intended to provide you with a way to raise concerns within St. Hilary School. The School hopes you will be satisfied by its response. Alternatively you may feel it is right to take the matter outside of the School, if so the following are possible contact points:

- The Department for Education
- Member of Parliament
- National Audit Office
- Health and Safety Executive
- Police
- Local Authority Designated Officer- Child protection (LADO) on: 01872 254549.

CONCLUSION

Existing good practice at St. Hilary School in terms of its systems, and of internal control both financial and non-financial, and the external regulatory environment in which the School operates, ensures that, as far as possible, cases of suspected fraud or impropriety do not occur. This Whistle-blowing Policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially, internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the School. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.

Reviewed in Autumn 2015

To be reviewed in Autumn 2017