



Lockerley Church of England Endowed Primary School Whistle Blowing Policy



Approved by	FGB
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Headteacher	

Procedure for Protected Disclosures

School Philosophy:

The school believes it is every individual's responsibility to ensure that all abide by the school code of conduct. It is therefore essential that staff who have concerns relating to possible malpractice are able to raise these concerns in a safe and supportive environment. By raising concerns staff show their responsibility towards maintaining a safe practice working environment.

Aim:

This policy aims to set out and clarify the position relating to protected disclosures - which gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice within the working environment at Lockerley Church of England Endowed School. The policy is designed to operate in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The procedure applies to all staff, volunteers, students, supply staff and parents and it is intended to encourage staff to raise concerns within the school as a first priority, rather than make a wider disclosure outside the school.

The policy is specific to Lockerley Church of England Endowed School.

Objectives:

All staff should understand their individual responsibility to raise matters of concern about children, colleagues or volunteers to the attention of the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher.

The operational procedures will outline what steps staff should take should they have serious concerns.

Operational procedure:

Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussions.

Examples of the types of issues that would fall within the scope of the procedure are:

- Conduct which is a criminal offence or a breach of the law.
- Sexual or physical abuse of pupils or others.
- Major health and safety risks, to staff or members of the public.
- Fraud and/or corruption.
- Other unethical conduct of a serious nature.

- The procedure gives protection to people who make such a disclosure in good faith from victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.
- It also ensures employees receive an appropriate response to their disclosure and are aware of how they can pursue the matter outside the County Council if this response is not satisfactory.
- It is acknowledged that there are some circumstances in which there may be a statutory requirement to report information to an external agency such as the police.
- Confidentiality between all parties should be maintained at all times.
- The Leadership Team and the Governing Body will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and responsible allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly, seriously and with appropriate confidentiality.

Staff should specify they are making a disclosure under the 'whistle blowing' procedure.

- A disclosure should be underpinned with a written report.
- It is advised that staff inform their professional body or trade union if they are involved in procedural disclosures.
 - There is an entitlement for staff to be represented by their trade union at any meeting
 - A friend may attend — usually another employee.
- There are no time limits on raising concerns but staff should be aware that a time lapse in reporting may hinder any investigation.
 - In certain circumstances a delay may have child protection or health and safety implications.
- If an allegation is made by an employee in good faith and later found to be untrue no action will be taken against the employee.

How to raise a concern:

- Raise your concern with the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher. There should be enough information to demonstrate to the person hearing the disclosure that there are reasonable grounds for making the allegation.
 - Put your concerns in writing, giving as much information as possible.
 - Note individuals involved, dates, timings, location.
- If the allegation is about a member of the Leadership Team, then raise the concern with a different senior member of staff.
- Within 10 working days there should be a written response to the employee to acknowledge that the concern has been received.
- This response will outline the steps that have been taken to address the issue and where possible give a time scale for resolution.
- Disclosures will be treated in confidence.
- It is difficult to act on anonymous disclosures as generally there may not be sufficient information to make an assessment of the credibility of the disclosure.

Resulting action:

Following a disclosure under this procedure, enquires will be made to establish the validity of the allegations. If they are found to be true the following action may include:

- The Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher may take advice from personnel services at the County Offices.
- A full internal investigation, possible resulting in disciplinary action.
- Referral to Children's Services or the police.
- Referral to the internal auditors or other County departments.

The employee who raised the concern will be informed of the outcome of the investigation if legal constraints allow.

- This will NOT include confidential details about disciplinary action taken against another employee. For reasons of confidentiality, all communications in writing will be sent to the employee's home address unless an alternative arrangement has been mutually agreed.

Taking matters further:

Should the employee feel that their concerns has not been resolved satisfactorily, they may write to the Chair of the Governing Body who will set up a small group of governors to investigate the concerns. A similar time frame will operate as in the earlier schedule.

In the event that the matter is still not resolved to the satisfaction of the employee, s/he may raise the concerns in writing to the County Council Education Department in the following order:

- With the School Improvement Partner
- With the County Education Officer
- With the Chief Executive

These officers will follow the procedures outlined earlier.

This policy can be read in conjunction with the school policies:

- Child Protection
- Confidentiality

Hampshire County Council offers published Guidelines and staff may seek clarification from these publications. The Admin Officer can direct staff to specific guidelines that may amplify this policy.

The following guidelines may be of specific interest.

- Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings. (2005)
- Appendix i: Hampshire Guidelines for the avoidance of unnecessary contact and unfounded allegations.
- Manual of Personnel Practice, vol 1, section 4: (Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998)
- More detailed guidance can be found at; www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection