OUR LADY & ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

PREPARED BY: P Devereux
APPROVED BY: Governing Body
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OUR LADY + ST JOSEPH
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

1 Preamble

The school is a Catholic school, founded by and forming part of the Catholic Church. In addition to the Church's funds which established the school, it is sustained in its mission by receipt of public funds. Accordingly it is accountable to the Catholic community of which it is a part and which provided the school and to the public whose funds it expends.
As a Catholic school, we are inspired by the Gospel values of truth, justice, compassion, and the inherent dignity of every person, as articulated in Catholic Social Teaching
The school is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees and others with whom we deal, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the school's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
Safeguarding the welfare and safety of children is our highest priority; any concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of pupils must be reported immediately in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
This policy makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage. This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the school in the first instance so that it is not necessary to resort to outside agencies.

2 Aims and Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all School staff, agency staff, contractors, governors and volunteers engaged by the School. There is a separate procedure for pupils and parents/carers to raise concerns about school related issues; for further information see the Complaints Policy There are existing procedures in place for staff to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment. This policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- conduct which is an offence, a breach of the law or contrary to Church teaching;
- disclosures related to miscarriages of justice;
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees;
- damage to the environment;
- the unauthorised use of public or Church funds;
- possible fraud and corruption;
- abuse of students; or
- other unethical or immoral conduct.

Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees or governors of the school or others acting on behalf of the school can be reported under this policy. This may be something that makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the values, beliefs and

standards to which the school subscribes; is against the school's trust deed or instrument of government or policies; falls below established standards of practice; or amounts to improper conduct.

3 Safeguards

The school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not prejudice you or being influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that might affect you. This policy reflects our obligations under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects staff from detriment or dismissal for raising genuine concerns in the public interest

4 Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. Your identity will only be disclosed without your consent if legally required or necessary to ensure the safety or wellbeing of others, for example in safeguarding cases at the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness. You also have a duty to observe this confidentiality.

5 Anonymous Allegations

You are encouraged to put your name to your allegation wherever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the school. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised;
- the credibility of the concern and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

6. Anonymous Child Protection Referrals

Anonymous concerns relating to the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults will always be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate."

7 Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

7 How to Raise a Concern

If you reasonably believe that you have discovered serious malpractice within the school you should ideally, in the first instance, raise these concerns with your line manager. However, if, for whatever reason this is not possible or appropriate, you should contact the headteacher.

You will be given the opportunity to discuss your suspicions and an appropriate

person will be designated as investigating officer, who will arrange for an investigation to take place.

If you suspect that the headteacher may be involved in the malpractice then you should contact the chair of the governing body. If you also suspect involvement by the chair, then you should contact the Diocesan Director of Education.

Within ten working days of your initial meeting, the investigating officer will write to confirm the details of your concern and that an investigation will take place.

Throughout the investigation, you will be kept informed of progress and you will normally be advised of the eventual outcome, subject to third party rights. All correspondence will be addressed to your home. If a meeting is needed, it may be arranged off site if you wish, and a union representative or a friend may accompany you.

Although records will need to be kept as the enquiries progress, these will be of an anonymous nature.

There can be no prescribed time limits for completion of the investigative process, but it will obviously be in the interests of all concerned if the issue is resolved without delay.

If you have any complaint about the way in which the investigation is being handled then you should raise this with the designated investigating officer in the first instance. If the complaint remains unresolved then you may contact the Diocesan Director of Education with your concerns.

When the investigation is complete a report will be presented to the governing body, which will decide upon the appropriate course of action. Subject to any relevant legal constraints, you will be informed of the action to be taken. If you do not agree with the outcome then you will have seven days in which to make your concerns known to the governing body, via the chairman. If you remain dissatisfied with the response from the governing body, then you may consider contacting the Secretary of State, who has the power to intervene if the governing body appears to be acting unreasonably. You should be aware, however, that this course of action could have serious implications for the school.

At no stage should you contact the media without the written permission of the Chairman of the Governing Body. Such action would be a breach of confidentiality and could result in disciplinary proceedings against you.

8 List of Contacts

Mr P Devereux – 020 3764 8860
Ms J Faulkner – 020 3764 8860
Rochelle Clarke – Clerk to the Governors

Director of Education Secretary of State
Vaughan House Department for Education

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