



Mission Statement:

The Sacred Heart is a Community committed to the education of its pupils in a Catholic Christian ethos, where each person is invited to serve God and others in faith, hope and love.

Aims:

To foster spiritual growth in Christian faith and values

To value, appreciate and enjoy learning.

To work for excellence

To further curiosity and creativity

To aspire to high ideals

To stimulate generous service of others

Whistle-Blowing Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As a person working for the School you may be the first to realise that there could be something seriously wrong within the School. However, you may feel that speaking up would be disloyal to your colleagues or to the School. You may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.
- 1.2 The School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability. We expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the School's work to come forward and voice those concerns.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Policy is to make it clear that you can raise your concerns in confidence without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The School encourages you to raise serious concerns in the first instance **within** the School rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside, and we would rather that you raised the matter when it is just a concern rather than waiting for proof.
- 1.4 You should continue to raise appropriate concerns with relevant external agencies such as the Health and Safety Executive.
- 1.5 The Policy and Procedure applies to all employees and those contractors working for the School, for example, builders. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract.
- 1.6 The Policy has been prepared in response to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 in accordance with Government guidance. The Policy has been formally adopted by the School.
- 1.7 The School recognises employees may wish to seek advice and be represented by their trade union representative when raising a concern under the Policy, and acknowledges the role trade union representatives play in this area.

2. Aims and Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 This policy aims to:
 - encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns;
 - provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
 - ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied;
 - re-assure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have raised any concern in good faith.
- 2.2 There are existing procedures in place to enable employees to lodge grievances relating to their employment. This Policy includes your concerns about:-
 - conduct which is an offence or a breach of law;
 - harassment of others;
 - sex, race or disability discrimination against others;
 - 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 funds;
 - possible fraud and corruption;
 - sexual or physical abuse;
 - breaches of the Council's Standing Orders, and policies;
 - anything that makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe the Council subscribes to; or
 - other unethical or improper conduct (not otherwise included in this list)

- concealing information about any of these matters

3. **The School's Promise to you**

- 3.1 The School is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees and others who work for the School.
- 3.2 The School recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If you raise your concern based on reasonable belief and in good faith, you have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and the public and The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 will protect you from dismissal or other detriment. If your concern 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.
- 3.3 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, even if you are genuinely mistaken in your concerns. Any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower may result in disciplinary action against the person responsible for the harassment or victimisation.
- 3.4 Any investigations into allegations arising from your whistle-blowing will not influence or be influenced by any other personnel procedures to which you may be subject.

4. **Confidentiality**

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. If we are not able to resolve your concern without revealing your identity (e.g. because your evidence may be needed in Court), we will discuss this with you.

5 **Accusations of physical or sexual abuse by members of staff or any staff, paid or unpaid, working within the school.**

- 5.1 The Headteacher will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (L.A.D.O. Tel: 01603 223473.) within 1 working day.
- 5.2 The L.A.D.O. will discuss the case with the Headteacher and will oversee to its conclusion. Serious allegations will result in suspension – a neutral act.

6 **In the event of the allegation being made against the Headteacher, the matter would be referred to the designated member of staff who would at once contact the Local Authority Designated Officer, Trustees and the Chairman of Governors.**

- 6.1 This is for the protection of the child and in the interests of the member of staff during the investigation.
- 6.2 The Chairman of the Trustees would suspend the Headteacher. It should not be seen as a pre-judgement of guilt.
- 6.3 Strategy meetings would be held and attended by Trustees, Chairman of Governors, Senior Management and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- 6.4 If disciplinary proceedings are initiated it is likely that three parallel investigations will take place.
- The inter-agency child protection process where decisions will be made on professional judgement. Any civil court proceeding to protect the child will be based on the balance of probabilities.
 - The police investigation into whether a crime has been committed. In order to prosecute there must be sufficient evidence that beyond reasonable doubt an offence has been committed. If there is insufficient evidence to prosecute, there may still be a need to safeguard the child. The member of staff may still face disciplinary proceedings.
 - The employer's disciplinary procedure looks to discover whether an employee has been guilty of a level of misconduct in the course of their duties.
- The procedure could include reviewing the recruitment and supervision of the staff member.
- 6.5 Further checks may be necessary.

6.6 **Remember** – Ofsted (Tel: 08456404040) must be informed as Boarders are involved.

6.7

7. **Anonymous allegations**

- 7.1 This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.
- 7.2 Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but may be considered by the School taking into account:
- the seriousness of the issues raised;
 - the credibility of the concern; and

- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.
- 7.3 The Head Teacher will decide in each case whether a complaint made anonymously should be investigated.

8. The responsible officer

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this Policy and will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes (but in a form which does not endanger your confidentiality) and will report as necessary to the School Governors and Trustees

9 Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed by the SMT and Governing Body

(Prepared October 2010 by SG and SMT; reviewed SG Nov 2011 Next review due Nov 2012)