EVERY STUDENT THRIVING

Whistleblowing Policy

		Review	Oct 2026

READY - RESPECTFUL - RESPONSIBLE - KIND

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction
    a. The Governing Body is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and ethical standards in public life.
    b. This document sets out the Whistleblowing Policy for staff employed in and working for the School and encourages employees/workers to not overlook concerns they may have or to take these outside of the School but to raise those concerns internally through a supportive procedure.
    c. The policy provides a structured mechanism for employees/workers to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the School's work without the risk of any subsequent detriment or disadvantage.
    d. This policy is in addition to the School's Complaints and Grievance Procedures. It does not form part of the School's disciplinary procedures, although disciplinary action may result from the application of this policy.
    e. This policy applies to:
        i. The policy and procedure set out in this document applies to staff employed in the school.
        ii. Workers, including agency staff, consultants, self employed individuals and trainees engaged to work in the School.
        iii. Contractors working for the Governing Body on School premises and suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the Governing Body on their own premises.
        iv. Organisations working in partnership with the Governing Body.
        v. Volunteers working with or for the Governing Body. (note that Volunteers are not currently covered by Public Interest Disclosures Act 1998)
    f. This policy does not apply to members of the general public including parents and/or guardians of pupils. Concerns raised by the general public should be made via the School's complaints procedure.
    g. The policy does not form part of the Governing Body contract of employment.
    h. Existing procedures are in place to enable employees/workers to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment. Any serious concerns that a member of staff has about an aspect of service provision or conduct of staff/governors or others acting on behalf of the school, can and should be reported under this policy.
2. Roles and Responsibilities
    a. Teachers/Headteacher/Line Managers and employees/workers have a responsibility within this procedure.
    b. Teachers/Headteacher/Line Managers will:
        i. Ensure the whistleblowing procedures are followed correctly, seeking advice from HR where they are unsure.
        ii. Support employees/workers who raise concerns under this procedure to ensure that they do not suffer detriment as a result of their action e.g. loss of status/income/conditions of employment.
        iii. Protect the identity of an employee/worker who raises concerns and does not want their name revealed, by only telling those who need to know and asking them to respect the confidentiality of this information.
        iv. Ensure that, even in the case of anonymity, the employee/worker is aware that any investigation may reveal the source of the information, and that

they may be asked to give a statement as part of the process of gathering evidence.

v. Where managerial or procedural action through a different policy e.g. Conduct and Discipline, is being taken against the employee who has raised concerns, the manager should contact Human Resources to decide whether that action should be delayed whilst an investigation under the whistleblowing procedure takes place.

vi. Allow employee to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the Governing Body's response

vii. Make support available to both the employee(s) raising the concerns and any employee(s) subject to investigation recognising that raising concerns can be difficult and stressful.

c. Employees/workers will:

i. Act in good faith and not whistleblow for personal gain or with malicious intent but use this procedure to raise concerns in the public interest.

ii. Reasonably believe their allegations and the information they provide are substantially true.

iii. use line manager or team meetings and other opportunities to raise questions and seek clarification on issues which are of day-to-day concern.

iv. whilst it can be difficult to raise concerns about the practice or behaviour of a colleague, employees must act to prevent an escalation of the problem and to prevent themselves being potentially implicated.

3. Principles

a. The policy and procedure contained within this document is founded on the following principles:

i. That employees/workers have a legal right and duty to report their concerns if they have a reasonable belief that wrongdoing may be occurring, or may have occurred, within the School.

ii. That the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees/workers from reprisal, victimisation or harassment at work if they raise a concern in good faith.

iii. To encourage employees/workers to raise serious concerns within the School initially, rather than overlooking a problem or whistleblowing directly to an outside organisation.

iv. To encourage and enable individuals to raise concerns about any aspect of the School's work and receive feedback on any action taken without fear of reprisal.

v. To ensure that individuals receive a timely response to their concerns.

vi. Not to discriminate against any individual in the application of this Policy and Procedure on the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or other grounds protected in law (part-time worker status, trade union membership or HIV positive status).

4. Definition of Whistleblowing

a. Whistleblowing occurs when an employee or worker raises a concern about a dangerous or illegal activity that they are aware of through their work and that may affect others, e.g. pupils, members of the public including parents and

guardians, or the School. A concern raised, also known as a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 must be in the public interest to qualify for protection.

b. The Whistleblower may not be directly or personally affected by the danger or illegality. Consequently, the whistleblower rarely has a personal interest in the outcome of the investigation and as such should not be expected to prove their case. Instead, he or she may raise the concern, also known as a protected disclosure, using the process outlined in this policy, so that others can address it.

c. Concerns that are covered by this policy include:
   i. Conduct which is an offence or breach of law
   ii. Failing to comply with a legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements
   iii. Health and Safety risks, including risks to pupils as well as employees/workers
   iv. Damage to the environment
   v. Abuse of pupils
   vi. Safeguarding concerns relating to children or vulnerable adults
   vii. Practice which falls below established standards of practice
   viii. Possible fraud, corruption or financial irregularity including unauthorised use of School funds (please see the School's Fraud Response)
   ix. Any other unethical conduct
   x. Covering up information about anything listed above
   xi. Bribery
   xii. Negligence
   xiii. breach of our internal policies and procedures
   xiv. conduct likely to damage our reputation
   xv. unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
   xvi. public examination fraud

d. This policy incorporates provisions that are required from the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

5. Exclusions

a. This policy does not cover the following cases:
   i. Issues raised by the general public – in these instances the individual School's Complaints Procedure should be used.
   ii. Issues raised by an employee about their own employment – this is dealt with through the School's grievance procedure.
   iii. Concerns regarding Safeguarding will be raised under the Whistleblowing Policy to ensure that the employee/worker raising the concern is protected by Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. However, the concern itself may be dealt with under the Managing Allegations Policy.
   iv. This policy is not to be used as an appeal mechanism for other procedures i.e. following an unfavourable outcome from a grievance procedure unless employees/workers feel that the process in another procedure was significantly and seriously compromised.
   v. Employees/workers must not use dismissal or redundancy selection as sole reasons for making a disclosure under this policy.

6. Misuse of the Policy

a. The Governing Body will take seriously any concerns raised that are subsequently proven to have been made maliciously. Any employee/worker who is found to have acted maliciously may be subject to disciplinary action.
b. If, however, an employee/worker raises a concern in good faith that is not later confirmed by investigations, no action will be taken against that individual.

7. Confidentiality & Anonymity
   a. If a concern is raised in confidence, the employee's or worker's identity will not be disclosed without first informing them. If the situation arises where the Governing Body is unable to resolve the concern without revealing the identity, e.g. because evidence is needed in court, this will be discussed first with the employee/worker who raised the concern to agree how to proceed. However, the Governing Body will not disclose the identity of the whistleblower to the person who is the subject of the disclosure or others not involved in the investigation unless it is absolutely necessary to do so and only with prior consent from the whistleblower.
   b. It is important to note that it will be much more difficult to investigate the matter or proceed in instances where a concern is raised anonymously. Accordingly, whilst the Governing Body will consider anonymous reports, it may not be possible to apply all aspects of this policy for concerns raised anonymously.
   c. It is expected that all parties involved in the whistleblowing process will maintain strict confidentiality throughout by ensuring that only the people who need to know have access to details of the case (with the exception of any legal obligations requiring action from the Governing Body, e.g. in health and safety matters).
   d. Any person found to have breached the terms of this policy in relation to confidentiality may be subject to action under the School's Conduct and Discipline procedures.

8. Safeguarding
   a. If an employee/worker has a concern that any person who works with children, young people or vulnerable adults, in connection with his/her employment or voluntary activity, has:
      i. behaved in a way that has harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult or may have harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult
      ii. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person or vulnerable adult
      iii. behaved towards a child, young person or vulnerable adult in a way that indicates he/she is unsuitable to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults
      iv. the employee/worker should raise the concern via the Whistleblowing Policy as this policy affords the employee/worker protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. It is important that a safeguarding concern is raised as a matter of urgency as the safety of others may be dependent upon the concern being dealt with swiftly.
   b. The concern may then be dealt with under the procedures surrounding Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers working with Children and Young People

c. In addition to guidance below in section 10, an employee/worker may raise their concern regarding a person who works with children, young people or vulnerable adults with a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

9. Initial Stages of Raising a Concern under the Whistleblowing Policy
   a. In the first instance, the employee/worker should raise their concern orally or in writing with an appropriate level of line management e.g Teacher/Headteacher/Line Manager. If the concern raised involves the Headteacher, an approach should be made to the Chair of Governors. If the concern raised involves the Chair of Governors the employee/worker should approach the Vice-Chairman of Governors.
   b. Concerns are better raised in writing. The employee should set out the background and history of the concerns, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reasons why s/he is particularly concerned about the situation. If an employee does not feel able to put the concern in writing, s/he should telephone or meet the appropriate person. The earlier an employee expresses the concern, the easier it is to take action.
   c. Concerns can also be raised through the employee/workers trade union representative. The representative should then seek advice on procedures from the local representative.
   d. Workers, such as agency workers or contractors, should raise a concern with their contact within the School, usually the person to whom they report.
   e. The employee/worker must make it clear that they are raising the concern under the Whistleblowing Policy.
   f. If they wish to remain anonymous, they should make this clear to the person they contact.
   g. Employees/workers will not be required to provide evidence of the concern but will be expected to demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds for raising the issue.
   h. Employees/Workers should have nothing to fear by reporting concerns and individuals who do invoke the whistleblowing procedures will be seen as ‘witnesses’ rather than ‘complainants’ by the School.
   i. Any investigations that are deemed necessary following the reporting of a concern will not be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that may already affect employees/workers.
   j. At any meeting during the whistleblowing process, the employee/worker has a right to be accompanied by an accredited union representative or work colleague.
   k. The Governing Body will not meet any costs associated with the attendance of the representative or colleague at a whistleblowing meeting beyond granting paid time off to a Governing Body employee.

10. Formal Stages of the Whistleblowing Procedure
    a. Stage 1 – Meeting with Headteacher/Line Manager
       i. On receipt of the concern from the employee/worker/Teacher, the Line Manager/Headteacher will either continue to deal with the concern or refer it to another appropriate Senior member of staff or the Chair of Governors. Where concerns raised involve Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults, the appropriate process should be followed.

1. The Headteacher/Line Manager will then write to the employee/worker within 5 working days of receipt of the concern to arrange a meeting to discuss the details of the concern that has been raised. This meeting should take place promptly.
2. The Headteacher/Line Manager should take notes of the details of the concern either during or straight after the meeting. The employee's letter and/or Headteacher/Line Manager's notes should make it clear that the employee is raising the issue via the whistle-blowing procedure and provide:
    a. the background and history of the concerns; and
    b. names, dates and places (where possible); and
    c. the reasons why the employee is particularly concerned about the situation.
3. The employee should be asked to date and sign their letter and/or the notes of any discussion.

ii. The Headteacher/Line Manager will then carry out a preliminary investigation following the policy set out above and in particular explain to the employee:

1. who he/she will need to speak to in order to determine the next steps
2. what steps s/he intends to take to address the concern
3. how s/he will communicate with the employee during and at the end of the process. It should be noted that the need for confidentiality may prevent the school giving the employee specific details of any necessary investigation or any necessary disciplinary action taken as a result.
4. that the Governing Body will do all that it can to protect the employee from discrimination and/or victimisation
5. that the matter will be taken seriously and investigated immediately
6. that if the employee's concern, though raised as a genuine concern, is not confirmed by investigation, no punitive action will be taken against them
7. if clear evidence is uncovered during the investigation that s/he has made a malicious or vexatious allegation, disciplinary action may be taken against them; and
8. the investigation may confirm their allegations to be unfounded in which case the Governing Body will deem the matter to be concluded unless new evidence becomes available.

iii. They will then make a decision on whether a full investigation needs to take place or if urgent action needs to be taken e.g. referral to the police.

iv. If a decision is made to carry out a full internal investigation, the Headteacher/Line Manager will appoint an Investigating Officer, and any parties involved in the concern will be interviewed. Notes of all meetings and interviews should be made.

v. The Headteacher/Line Manager will then notify the employee/worker of the outcome in writing within 5 working days of the date of the meeting This time limit may be extended if the investigation is fairly complex and will take time but the employee/worker who raised the concern must be notified of any delay.

vi. If the employee/worker is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, they may opt to take the matter to Stage 2 by writing to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors within 10 working days of the date of the decision letter at stage 1.

vii. The Headteacher/Line Manager will also notify the person that is the subject of the disclosure within 5 working days of the date of the meeting. Upon receipt of the confirmation the individual will be able to appeal any decisions by writing to the Headteacher or Governing Body.

b. Stage 2 – Meeting with Headteacher/Chair of Governors

i. Headteacher/Chair of Governors (Hearing Officer) will then write to the employee/worker within 5 working days of receiving the letter to arrange a meeting to discuss the continuing concerns and why they are dissatisfied with the decision at Stage 1. This meeting should take place promptly. Notes should be made of this meeting. The Headteacher/Chair of Governors should write to the employee:

1. acknowledging that the concern has been received
2. indicating how they propose to deal with the matter
3. giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response; and/or
4. telling the employee whether any initial enquiries have been made and
5. telling the employee whether further investigations will take place, and if not why not; and/or
6. letting the employee know when s/he will receive further details if the situation is not yet resolved.

ii. The Hearing Officer may then decide to investigate further and will need to decide what action to take. The employee/worker must be updated with the outcome of the meeting, within 5 working days.

iii. If the employee/worker is dissatisfied with the outcome at stage 2, they may opt to take the matter to stage 3, by raising the concern externally, within 10 working days of the date of the decision letter at stage 2.

iv. Following a Hearing if the employee/worker is dissatisfied with the way in which procedures were followed, they should put their concerns in writing to their relevant HR contact in order that concerns may be addressed.

c. Stage 3 – Raising the Concern Externally

i. At Stage 3, the employee/worker is entitled to take their concern to any of the following 2:

1. A County Councillor or the local Member of Parliament
2. External Auditor
3. The Police
4. Public Concern at Work (www.pcaw.co.uk or telephone 020 7404 6609)
5. A relevant professional body or inspectorate (e.g. OFSTED OR SSI)
6. A recognised trade union or professional association
7. The Local Government Ombudsman

ii. In taking their concerns outside the School, the employee/worker should, as far as possible, avoid revealing confidential information (e.g. about pupils, clients or other workers).

iii. Public Concern at Work is an accredited legal advice centre so an employee/worker who approaches this organisation does not breach the duty of confidence that they owe to their employer. They are a registered charity that employees can contact for advice to assist them in raising concerns about poor practice at work. The charity also provides advice to employers as to the possible ways to address these concerns.

11. Headteachers/Governors
    a. Headteachers should raise their concern initially to the Chair of Governors and then with the Department for Education if they wish to take the concern to a Stage 2.
    b. In the event that a Governor wishes to raise a concern under the Whistleblowing Policy, they should address their concerns to the Department for Education.
12. Investigation
    a. When a concern is raised through the Whistleblowing Policy, it may be necessary to carry out an internal inquiry. In this instance, an Investigating Officer will be appointed by the Hearing Officer and is responsible for investigating events surrounding or leading to the concern raised.
    b. The Investigating Officer will meet any other parties or witnesses named in the investigation or deemed to be relevant. At this point, a written summary of interview notes and any findings should be produced for the Hearing Officer.
    c. If further allegations or information come to light during the course of the investigation the Hearing Office must be kept informed.
13. Action under the Whistleblowing Policy
    a. Feedback will be given to the employee/worker who has raised the concern under the Whistleblowing Policy. However, it may not be possible to tell the employee/worker the precise action that may be taken as a result as this may infringe a duty of confidence owed by the School to another employee/worker.
    b. Prior to any investigation, the Headteacher/Line Manager/Chair of Governors may decide to:
        i. Take action without the need for an investigation
        ii. Take urgent action before an investigation takes place, e.g. suspension of an employee/worker, if sufficient initial evidence indicates this is warranted. See the School's Conduct and Discipline Policy for details on Suspension.
        iii. Undertake an investigation e.g. through the disciplinary procedure, Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers Working with Children and Young People, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults process or by internal audit through the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Statement of Policy if the case involves financial irregularity or corruption.
        iv. Refer the concern straight to the police. If a concern is referred straight to the police then an internal investigation must not be carried out as the police will wish to speak to all parties involved.
        v. Arrange an alternative independent enquiry e.g. Health and Safety Executive
    c. The employee/worker should be kept informed as to what decision has been made and an explanation given for the decision.
    d. If a decision is made to take action under another policy e.g. Conduct and Discipline or the Managing Allegations, after an investigation, the Headteacher/Line Manager/Chair of Governors should:

i. Write to the employee/worker who has raised the concern to inform them of the outcome within 5 working days of the meeting.
ii. Give reasons for the decision made and explain that the employee/worker has a right to take the matter to the next level and give details of how they should do this.

e. If, following the use of the whistleblowing procedures, an individual believes they are being subjected to detrimental treatment by any person within the School, they must inform their relevant Line Manager immediately and appropriate action will be taken to protect them from any reprisals.
f. As part of the Governing Body's commitment to dealing with concerns raised via this policy, any person who victimises or harasses an individual as a result of them having raised a concern under the procedure, may be subject to disciplinary action.
g. Similarly any person who deters or attempts to deter any individual from genuinely raising concerns under this policy may also be subject to disciplinary action.

14. Records
    a. The Chair of Governors should keep a record of concerns raised within the School. Records should not be kept on the file of the individual who raised the concern under any circumstances.

Whistleblowing Policy

15. Introduction
    a. The Governing Body is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and ethical standards in public life.
    b. This document sets out the Whistleblowing Policy for staff employed in and working for the School and encourages employees/workers to not overlook concerns they may have or to take these outside of the School but to raise those concerns internally through a supportive procedure.
    c. The policy provides a structured mechanism for employees/workers to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the School's work without the risk of any subsequent detriment or disadvantage.
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they may be asked to give a statement as part of the process of gathering evidence.

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vi. Not to discriminate against any individual in the application of this Policy and Procedure on the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or other grounds protected in law (part-time worker status, trade union membership or HIV positive status).

18. Definition of Whistleblowing

a. Whistleblowing occurs when an employee or worker raises a concern about a dangerous or illegal activity that they are aware of through their work and that may affect others, e.g. pupils, members of the public including parents and

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    f. If they wish to remain anonymous, they should make this clear to the person they contact.
    g. Employees/workers will not be required to provide evidence of the concern but will be expected to demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds for raising the issue.
    h. Employees/Workers should have nothing to fear by reporting concerns and individuals who do invoke the whistleblowing procedures will be seen as ‘witnesses’ rather than ‘complainants’ by the School.
    i. Any investigations that are deemed necessary following the reporting of a concern will not be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that may already affect employees/workers.
    j. At any meeting during the whistleblowing process, the employee/worker has a right to be accompanied by an accredited union representative or work colleague.
    k. The Governing Body will not meet any costs associated with the attendance of the representative or colleague at a whistleblowing meeting beyond granting paid time off to a Governing Body employee.

24. Formal Stages of the Whistleblowing Procedure
    a. Stage 1 – Meeting with Headteacher/Line Manager
        i. On receipt of the concern from the employee/worker/Teacher, the Line Manager/Headteacher will either continue to deal with the concern or refer it to another appropriate Senior member of staff or the Chair of Governors. Where concerns raised involve Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults, the appropriate process should be followed.

1. The Headteacher/Line Manager will then write to the employee/worker within 5 working days of receipt of the concern to arrange a meeting to discuss the details of the concern that has been raised. This meeting should take place promptly.
2. The Headteacher/Line Manager should take notes of the details of the concern either during or straight after the meeting. The employee's letter and/or Headteacher/Line Manager's notes should make it clear that the employee is raising the issue via the whistle-blowing procedure and provide:
    a. the background and history of the concerns; and
    b. names, dates and places (where possible); and
    c. the reasons why the employee is particularly concerned about the situation.
3. The employee should be asked to date and sign their letter and/or the notes of any discussion.

ii. The Headteacher/Line Manager will then carry out a preliminary investigation following the policy set out above and in particular explain to the employee:

1. who he/she will need to speak to in order to determine the next steps
2. what steps s/he intends to take to address the concern
3. how s/he will communicate with the employee during and at the end of the process. It should be noted that the need for confidentiality may prevent the school giving the employee specific details of any necessary investigation or any necessary disciplinary action taken as a result.
4. that the Governing Body will do all that it can to protect the employee from discrimination and/or victimisation
5. that the matter will be taken seriously and investigated immediately
6. that if the employee's concern, though raised as a genuine concern, is not confirmed by investigation, no punitive action will be taken against them
7. if clear evidence is uncovered during the investigation that s/he has made a malicious or vexatious allegation, disciplinary action may be taken against them; and
8. the investigation may confirm their allegations to be unfounded in which case the Governing Body will deem the matter to be concluded unless new evidence becomes available.

iii. They will then make a decision on whether a full investigation needs to take place or if urgent action needs to be taken e.g. referral to the police.

iv. If a decision is made to carry out a full internal investigation, the Headteacher/Line Manager will appoint an Investigating Officer, and any parties involved in the concern will be interviewed. Notes of all meetings and interviews should be made.

v. The Headteacher/Line Manager will then notify the employee/worker of the outcome in writing within 5 working days of the date of the meeting This time limit may be extended if the investigation is fairly complex and will take time but the employee/worker who raised the concern must be notified of any delay.

vi. If the employee/worker is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, they may opt to take the matter to Stage 2 by writing to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors within 10 working days of the date of the decision letter at stage 1.

vii. The Headteacher/Line Manager will also notify the person that is the subject of the disclosure within 5 working days of the date of the meeting. Upon receipt of the confirmation the individual will be able to appeal any decisions by writing to the Headteacher or Governing Body.

b. Stage 2 – Meeting with Headteacher/Chair of Governors

i. Headteacher/Chair of Governors (Hearing Officer) will then write to the employee/worker within 5 working days of receiving the letter to arrange a meeting to discuss the continuing concerns and why they are dissatisfied with the decision at Stage 1. This meeting should take place promptly. Notes should be made of this meeting. The Headteacher/Chair of Governors should write to the employee:

1. acknowledging that the concern has been received
2. indicating how they propose to deal with the matter
3. giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response; and/or
4. telling the employee whether any initial enquiries have been made and
5. telling the employee whether further investigations will take place, and if not why not; and/or
6. letting the employee know when s/he will receive further details if the situation is not yet resolved.

ii. The Hearing Officer may then decide to investigate further and will need to decide what action to take. The employee/worker must be updated with the outcome of the meeting, within 5 working days.

iii. If the employee/worker is dissatisfied with the outcome at stage 2, they may opt to take the matter to stage 3, by raising the concern externally, within 10 working days of the date of the decision letter at stage 2.

iv. Following a Hearing if the employee/worker is dissatisfied with the way in which procedures were followed, they should put their concerns in writing to their relevant HR contact in order that concerns may be addressed.

c. Stage 3 – Raising the Concern Externally

i. At Stage 3, the employee/worker is entitled to take their concern to any of the following 2:

1. A County Councillor or the local Member of Parliament
2. External Auditor
3. The Police
4. Public Concern at Work (www.pcaw.co.uk or telephone 020 7404 6609)
5. A relevant professional body or inspectorate (e.g. OFSTED OR SSI)
6. A recognised trade union or professional association
7. The Local Government Ombudsman

ii. In taking their concerns outside the School, the employee/worker should, as far as possible, avoid revealing confidential information (e.g. about pupils, clients or other workers).

iii. Public Concern at Work is an accredited legal advice centre so an employee/worker who approaches this organisation does not breach the duty of confidence that they owe to their employer. They are a registered charity that employees can contact for advice to assist them in raising concerns about poor practice at work. The charity also provides advice to employers as to the possible ways to address these concerns.

25. Headteachers/Governors
    a. Headteachers should raise their concern initially to the Chair of Governors and then with the Department for Education if they wish to take the concern to a Stage 2.
    b. In the event that a Governor wishes to raise a concern under the Whistleblowing Policy, they should address their concerns to the Department for Education.
26. Investigation
    a. When a concern is raised through the Whistleblowing Policy, it may be necessary to carry out an internal inquiry. In this instance, an Investigating Officer will be appointed by the Hearing Officer and is responsible for investigating events surrounding or leading to the concern raised.
    b. The Investigating Officer will meet any other parties or witnesses named in the investigation or deemed to be relevant. At this point, a written summary of interview notes and any findings should be produced for the Hearing Officer.
    c. If further allegations or information come to light during the course of the investigation the Hearing Office must be kept informed.
27. Action under the Whistleblowing Policy
    a. Feedback will be given to the employee/worker who has raised the concern under the Whistleblowing Policy. However, it may not be possible to tell the employee/worker the precise action that may be taken as a result as this may infringe a duty of confidence owed by the School to another employee/worker.
    b. Prior to any investigation, the Headteacher/Line Manager/Chair of Governors may decide to:
        i. Take action without the need for an investigation
        ii. Take urgent action before an investigation takes place, e.g. suspension of an employee/worker, if sufficient initial evidence indicates this is warranted. See the School's Conduct and Discipline Policy for details on Suspension.
        iii. Undertake an investigation e.g. through the disciplinary procedure, Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers Working with Children and Young People, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults process or by internal audit through the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Statement of Policy if the case involves financial irregularity or corruption.
        iv. Refer the concern straight to the police. If a concern is referred straight to the police then an internal investigation must not be carried out as the police will wish to speak to all parties involved.
        v. Arrange an alternative independent enquiry e.g. Health and Safety Executive
    c. The employee/worker should be kept informed as to what decision has been made and an explanation given for the decision.
    d. If a decision is made to take action under another policy e.g. Conduct and Discipline or the Managing Allegations, after an investigation, the Headteacher/Line Manager/Chair of Governors should:

i. Write to the employee/worker who has raised the concern to inform them of the outcome within 5 working days of the meeting.
ii. Give reasons for the decision made and explain that the employee/worker has a right to take the matter to the next level and give details of how they should do this.

e. If, following the use of the whistleblowing procedures, an individual believes they are being subjected to detrimental treatment by any person within the School, they must inform their relevant Line Manager immediately and appropriate action will be taken to protect them from any reprisals.

f. As part of the Governing Body's commitment to dealing with concerns raised via this policy, any person who victimises or harasses an individual as a result of them having raised a concern under the procedure, may be subject to disciplinary action.

g. Similarly any person who deters or attempts to deter any individual from genuinely raising concerns under this policy may also be subject to disciplinary action.

28. Records

a. The Chair of Governors should keep a record of concerns raised within the School. Records should not be kept on the file of the individual who raised the concern under any circumstances.