

St Finbar's Catholic Primary School

School has adopted Liverpool City Council's Whistleblowing Policy

4. The Whistleblowing Policy

4.1 The School is committed to:

- Encouraging all its employees, workers and others to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon those concerns.
- Providing confidential avenues through which concerns can be raised and general feedback given, where possible, on any action that may be taken.
- Reassuring employees that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that the disclosure has been made in the public interest and it is not unlawful or contravenes other forms of legislation.

4.2 There are procedures in place to enable employees to lodge a Grievance relating to their own employment and there is also the school's Complaints Procedure for more general complaints. The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of these other procedures. These issues may include:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law.
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation.
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks (including risks to the public as well as other employees) if reported and not acted upon.
- Damage to the environment.
- The unauthorised use of public funds.
- Possible fraud and corruption.
- Sexual, physical or other abuse of clients.
- Other unethical conduct.
- Actions which are unprofessional, inappropriate or conflict with a general understanding of what is right and wrong.
- And any attempt to prevent disclosure of the above

4.3 A typical whistleblowing referral may be about something that:

Makes the individual feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, their experience or the standards they believe the school subscribes to.

- Is against the City Council's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and other policies and legal obligations.
- Falls below established standards of good practice.
- Amounts to improper conduct.

5. Assurances to all Employees

5.1 There is a requirement for all employees and Members to report any discovered or suspected cases of fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity immediately to the Divisional Manager Audit and Risk either directly or through their own Chief Officer (Director) or the Whistleblowing Line, as appropriate (**Financial Regulation 2.7**).

5.2 The requirement is not superseded by this Whistleblowing Policy and the chief officer must act accordingly if a financial issue is raised.

5.3 The school **will not tolerate** any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect individual(s) who have raised a concern **in the public interest**.

5.4 Any **investigation** into allegations of **potential malpractice** will not influence or be influenced by any **disciplinary** or **redundancy procedures** that already affect the individual who has raised the concern.

6. Confidentiality

6.1 Where appropriate, all concerns will be treated in confidence and **every effort** will be made not to reveal the identity of the individual who has raised the concern unless there are legal reasons to the contrary.

6.2 It must be noted that any **person, who is the subject of a whistleblowing allegation has legal rights** which may be exercised and are independent of the School/City Council.

7. Untrue Allegations

7.1 If an individual makes an allegation which they reasonably believe is in the public interest, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, then no action will be taken against them.

7.2 If an individual makes an allegation which turns out to be untrue, without reasonably believing the allegation to be made in the public interest, then the matter will be considered under the City Council Disciplinary Procedure and disciplinary action may be pursued.

7.3 Employees may take legal action independently of the school. This includes the person who is the subject of the complaint, the complainant and the school

Additions:

8. How to raise a concern

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate Manager. However, if your concerns involve your manager or the issue is particularly sensitive you should speak to your Chief Officer. They will decide on the next course of action which, if the suspicion seems well founded, will involve contacting the Head of Internal Audit.

If you feel unable to speak to either your manager or Chief Officer, you can use the LCC Whistle-Blowing line (tel: 225 2660) and calls will be put through to the relevant service manager.

The Head of Audit has responsibility for the investigation of all alleged financial irregularities (other than benefit claimant fraud). The Head of Audit also has responsibility for channelling concerns and overseeing and monitoring the investigative process in respect of other issues raised in accordance with this Procedure.

If you are unwilling to raise your concern with the Head of Audit, then you could contact the charity Public Concern At Work (telephone 020 7404 6609 or email helpline@pcaw.co.uk). They will provide confidential advice, free of charge, to anyone

concerned about wrongdoing at work but who are not sure whether or how to raise the concern. If you do take the matter outside the Council, you should ensure that you do not disclose confidential information or information which is legally protected.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take action. Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns.

You may invite your trade union, professional association representative or a colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

9. How the matter can be taken further

The Council hopes you will be satisfied with any action taken. If you are not, and if you feel it is right to take the matter outside the Council, the following are possible contact points:

- Audit Commission
- Your trade union
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisation
- The police.

If you do take the matter outside the Council, you should ensure that you do not disclose confidential information or information which is legally protected. Employees are also reminded that, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, contact with the press should only be made via the City Council's News Centre.