

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Whistleblowing Policy



"I came so that you may have life, life in all its fullness" John 10:10

St Michael Catholic Primary School and Nursery is a Catholic family of faith following the teachings of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community respect the values of: Church, Independence, Resilience, Caring, Learning and Enjoyment for all. Belief in these values will nurture all as individuals and instil in them the confidence to meet their full potential, providing them with the best grounding for their future place in an ever-changing world.

Policy Date	September 2026
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs N Collins
Review Date	September 2027

Policy Statement

St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School is committed to conducting its business with honesty, integrity, openness and accountability.

We expect all staff, volunteers, governors, contractors and visitors to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct and safeguarding practice.

The school is committed to creating an environment in which individuals feel able to raise concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, safeguarding concerns, unethical behaviour or unlawful activity without fear of reprisal, victimisation or disadvantage.

This policy forms part of the school's wider safeguarding culture and supports the principles outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage staff and others working with the school to raise concerns.
 - Promote a culture of openness, transparency and accountability.
 - Provide a clear process for reporting concerns.
 - Ensure concerns are investigated appropriately.
 - Protect those who raise genuine concerns.
 - Strengthen safeguarding arrangements.
 - Support the early identification of poor practice or misconduct.
 - Prevent concerns from being ignored or concealed.
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Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Agency staff

- Volunteers
- Governors
- Contractors
- Students on placement
- Anyone working on behalf of the school

Concerns may relate to:

- Safeguarding concerns
- Child protection concerns
- Conduct of staff
- Breaches of law
- Professional misconduct
- Fraud or corruption
- Financial irregularities
- Health and safety concerns
- Discrimination
- Bullying or harassment
- Abuse of authority
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above

This list is not exhaustive.

Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All adults working with children have a duty to raise concerns where they believe:

- A child may be at risk of harm.
- Safeguarding procedures are not being followed.
- A member of staff may pose a risk to children.
- Low-level concerns about adults' behaviour require reporting.
- Professional boundaries have been breached.
- Poor practice may place children at risk.

Concerns relating to safeguarding should always be reported without delay.

No member of staff should ever assume that someone else will report a concern.

Low-Level Concerns

The school promotes a culture where low-level concerns can be raised openly and professionally.

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, regarding an adult's conduct that may be inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct.

Examples may include:

- Boundary issues
- Inappropriate language
- Unprofessional behaviour
- Use of personal devices
- Conduct that causes concern but does not meet the threshold for an allegation

Reporting low-level concerns helps maintain a culture of vigilance and safeguarding.

Protection for Whistleblowers

The school recognises the importance of protecting individuals who raise genuine concerns.

No person raising a concern in good faith will suffer:

- Victimisation
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Unfair treatment
- Detriment to their employment or position

The school will not tolerate retaliation against individuals who raise legitimate concerns.

Confidentiality

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality.

However, anonymity cannot always be guaranteed where:

- Safeguarding investigations require further action.
- Police involvement is necessary.
- A legal requirement to disclose information exists.
- The concern requires formal investigation.

Where confidentiality cannot be maintained, the reasons will be explained wherever possible.

Anonymous Concerns

Anonymous concerns will be considered.

The school recognises that anonymous reports can be more difficult to investigate because further clarification may not be possible.

The seriousness of the concern, supporting evidence and risk to others will be considered when determining next steps.

Raising a Concern

In most circumstances, concerns should be raised with:

- A line manager
- A senior leader
- The Headteacher

Where this is not appropriate, concerns may be raised with:

- The Chair of Governors
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- The Diocese
- External safeguarding agencies

Individuals may seek advice from their trade union or professional association before raising concerns if they wish.

Concerns About the Headteacher

Where concerns relate to the Headteacher, they should be raised directly with the Chair of Governors.

Concerns involving safeguarding should also follow appropriate safeguarding procedures.

Responding to Concerns

All concerns will be:

- Taken seriously
- Acknowledged appropriately
- Investigated proportionately
- Managed fairly
- Recorded appropriately

The response will depend on:

- The nature of the concern
- The seriousness of the issue
- Safeguarding implications
- Any legal obligations

Investigations may be conducted internally or involve external agencies where necessary.

Outcomes

Following investigation, outcomes may include:

- No further action
- Additional monitoring
- Management action
- Staff support or training
- Disciplinary procedures
- Referral to external agencies
- Referral to safeguarding agencies
- Police involvement where appropriate

The person raising the concern will be informed that the matter has been considered, although confidentiality may limit the detail that can be shared.

External Reporting

Where individuals feel unable to raise concerns internally, or believe concerns have not been addressed appropriately, they may seek advice from external organisations.

For safeguarding concerns involving children, staff may contact:

- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

- Children's Social Care
- The Police
- The Diocese
- The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available for professionals who believe concerns regarding child welfare have not been addressed appropriately.

Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure effective whistleblowing arrangements are in place.
 - Promote a culture of openness and accountability.
 - Monitor implementation of this policy.
 - Ensure concerns are investigated appropriately.
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Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Promote awareness of this policy.
 - Ensure concerns are taken seriously.
 - Implement appropriate investigations.
 - Support staff raising concerns.
 - Maintain confidential records.
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Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Raising concerns appropriately.
 - Acting in the best interests of children.
 - Following safeguarding procedures.
 - Supporting a culture of openness and accountability.
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Training

The school will ensure that staff are aware of:

- This policy
- Safeguarding expectations
- Reporting procedures
- Low-level concerns
- Allegations against staff procedures
- Professional conduct expectations

Whistleblowing arrangements will form part of safeguarding induction and ongoing safeguarding training.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if changes to safeguarding guidance, legislation or school practice require amendment.

Linked Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy

- Low-Level Concerns Policy
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Complaints Policy
 - Equal Opportunities Policy
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St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School is committed to creating a culture where concerns are raised promptly, safeguarding is prioritised and every member of the school community acts with integrity, honesty and professionalism.