

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

St Michael's Mission Statement



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

- **St Michael's 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.**

Introduction

St Michaels Catholic Primary School and Nursery is committed to tackling acts of fraud, corruption, unethical conduct and malpractice regardless of who commits them or where they are committed. We want everyone to feel confident about raising a concern regarding any such conduct or action and that this will be properly dealt with at the earliest opportunity and not overlooked or ignored.

To encourage and enable this the school will ensure that anyone who uses this policy to raise a concern will be protected from any form of detriment, harassment or victimisation regardless of:-

- a) the content of the concern raised
- b) with whom the concern is raised with
- c) whatever the outcome of raising the concern.

It is the moral and contractual duty of all staff to raise any concerns they may have about the attitude and actions of colleagues. This should normally be done through the usual line channels of reporting/responsibility.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- To ensure the highest standard of safeguarding
- To enable all staff who may have a concern, no matter the situation, that they have a person to share it with.
- To remind all staff to be aware that any concern about another member of staff needs to be discussed with an appropriate member of staff
- To ensure all staff know the policy and procedure to follow
- To ensure confidentiality where ever possible in the procedure.
- To fully explore and investigate any concerns to maintain

Who can raise a concern?

Anyone who undertakes work for St Michael's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, whether that be an employee, a contractor, or a paid or unpaid volunteer.

Is there anything that should not be raised through the Whistle-blowing policy?

The policy should not be used to raise a concern about terms and conditions of employment which would be covered by the Grievance Procedure, or matters that can be dealt with through another procedure. It is also possible that, after raising a concern, you might be advised about other agreed school or Medway council policies or procedures which may be more appropriate to the nature of the concern. However, if in any doubt, this policy can be used as a starting point for your concerns.

Misuse of the Whistle-blowing policy

Raising a concern unreasonably, with malicious intent, or for personal gain or the gain of others, is not acceptable and may lead to disciplinary action under the school's Disciplinary Policy.

Confidentiality

St Michael's Catholic Primary School and Nursery accept that wherever possible the confidentiality of anyone wishing to raise a concern will be protected. There might however be occasions where your confidentiality cannot be protected, for example, where there is the involvement of the police. If there is any possibility that your confidentiality cannot be protected, you will be told why this is the case and will be offered appropriate advice and support.

Anonymously raised concerns

Concerns expressed anonymously will be investigated on the basis of their merits. However, an investigation may be hampered by the inability to gain further information and the school would encourage you to provide some method of contacting you in case further information is required.

Scope of the policy

A concern can relate to any unethical or unprofessional conduct within the school. The policy not only covers acts that have actually occurred but also potentially unethical or unprofessional conduct. Below are some examples but please remember this is by no means exhaustive:-

- 1 an actual or potential breach of the law,
- 2 possible or actual miscarriages of justice,
- 3 the actual or possible abuse (sexual or physical) of clients in the schools' care,
- 4 potential or actual acts causing damage to the environment,
- 5 acts or potential acts of fraud and corruption or the misuse of public funds,
- 6 acts that could have a detrimental effect on the health and safety of employees and/or the public,
- 7 actual or potential acts of harassment or bullying of, or by, someone working for the school or Medway LA,
- 8 actual or potential acts of racial or sexual discrimination
- 9 any unethical conduct that causes concern or brings the reputation of the school or Medway LA into disrepute or,
- 10 the deliberate concealment of information that would indicate any of the above.

If you are in any doubt as to whether or not to raise a concern then confidential advice can be sought from HR Services or your trade union representative.

Note: - If, when disclosing a concern, you commit a criminal offence, you may lose your rights to protection from detriment. Again, if in any doubt, seek advice from the sources named above.

What to consider when expressing a concern

To enable your concerns to be dealt with in a proper and effective manner here are some guidelines for you to consider:-

- Be as clear as possible about what the concern is and who and what it relates to. You may also want to discuss the concern with others to see if it is shared.
- Be as clear as possible about who maybe involved, when and where actions may have taken place etc. Make sure the facts are recorded i.e. record the dates and times in a diary. This way you can be clear and not have to rely on memory or hearsay.
- Make sure you ask for your concerns to be dealt with under this procedure.

How to raise a concern

No matter with whom you raise your concern, it will be dealt with under this procedure. If the person with whom you raise the concern feels it necessary they may want to refer your concern on to either a specialist team within the Diocese or

the Local Authority , whichever is appropriate. If this is the case you will be contacted first and have the opportunity to discuss any issues this may raise.

As a First Point of Contact:

A concern would normally be raised initially with your line manager or a senior member of staff. However this may not always be possible, dependent on the nature of the concern and who is involved.

Alternatively:

If you feel unable to raise the matter with your line manager or a senior member of staff you should contact the Headteacher directly. If your concern is about the headteacher you should contact the Chair of Governors Mrs Wendy Greatorex.

Or:

The procedure to be followed

If, at any stage of the procedure, you are asked or wish to meet with someone addressing the concerns you have raised you have the option to be accompanied by a work place colleague, trade union representative or representative from a professional body.

When you first raise a concern:

- A) However you wish to express your concern, by telephone or in person, you will receive an acknowledgement of your concerns from the person to whom you have expressed them. This will be sent to you within 5 working days of being notified of your concern and, if you wish, can be sent to your home address.

The person to whom you have reported your concern will then decide how to progress. This may mean undertaking an investigation. This does not mean that the concern is either true or untrue, but will help to assess the gravity of the complaint and establish the facts. It could be possible that concerns raised may be the result of a misunderstanding or an authorised change in practice.

- B) Within 10 working days of making your concerns known you will either:-
 - i) have a confidential meeting with the relevant person to further discuss your concerns,
 - ii) or, have received, in writing, an outline of how the relevant person intends to deal with the concerns raised.
- C) Dependent on the nature of the concerns you may have subsequent meetings with the relevant investigating persons. These can be held “off-site” if desired.

The outcome of your concern

Having raised the concern, the school and /or Medway LA recognises that you will need to be assured that the issues have been dealt with. You will be kept informed on a regular basis of what actions are being taken and the final results of any investigations.

In some situations, such as referrals to external bodies, it may not be appropriate (or legally possible) to supply you with the full information discovered. However the reasons for this will be explained at that time.

Taking your concern further

If you have gone through all these channels and you still have concerns, or feel that the issues have not been fully or appropriately addressed, you can contact the Director of Children's Services, or have them contacted on your behalf, to discuss your concern in confidence.

However, you should not refer the matter outside the organisation without first ensuring that all other possible avenues have been exhausted internally

Date: May 2018

Date of Review: May 2020

