



# Ball Green Primary School

## Whistleblowing Policy

### INTRODUCTION

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the school. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the school. They 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.

Ball Green Primary is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we encourage employees, and others who work with us, with serious concerns about any aspect of the school's work to come forward and voice those concerns. This policy makes it clear that this can be done without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.

The policy applies to all employees and provides them with a secure basis for reporting suspicions of impropriety, in the knowledge that if requested the matter will be treated confidentially.

The procedures contained within this policy are in addition to the school's complaints process and any other statutory reporting procedure that applies within the school.

### AIMS OF THIS POLICY

The Whistleblowing Arrangements Code of Practice Publicly Available Specification developed by the British Standards Institute and Public Concern at Work defines whistleblowing as;

The popular term used when someone who works for or in an organisation raises a concern about a possible fraud, crime, danger or other serious risk that could threaten the pupils, parents or staff of the school.

Whistleblowing can therefore be described in simple terms as a disclosure made by any employee working within the school who has concerns about a danger or illegality that has a public interest to it, usually because it threatens others.

A grievance or private complaint is, by contrast, a dispute about an individual's own employment or personal position and has no public interest to it.

This Whistleblowing Policy has been developed in line with best practice as described in the code of practice and aims to:

encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice

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*Article 28: Every child has the right to an education.*

*Article 29: Ball Green Primary School has a responsibility to develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.*



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provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken

provide reassurance that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith.

The whistle-blowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

conduct which is an offence or a breach of law

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

other unethical conduct

### How to raise a concern

Adults working in a school are often the first to realize that someone's actions or behaviour is not in line with school or legal expectations. Therefore:

You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken

Pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why

Approach your Headteacher, or if your concern is about your headteacher, you can approach the next senior member of staff (Deputy Head) or the Chair of Governors.

All concerns will be treated in confidence and we will make every effort not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

It is preferable for concerns to be raised in writing and where this is the case the following details are requested;

Your name and contact details

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background information and history including details as to why you are concerned

whether the issue has already been reported to management and the outcome of this

whether you wish your name to remain confidential

whether you want feedback

the names and roles of any other employees who may support your concern.

Where reports are made verbally to one of the named officers they should attempt to ascertain the same information.

A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

The earlier a concern is reported the easier it is to take action.

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 friend to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

### **HOW WILL THE SCHOOL RESPOND**

The school will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.

As part of this process contact will be made with you to clarify your concerns and obtain any further information that you may have. You will also be provided with details of who to contact should you require further support.

Where appropriate, the matters raised may:

be investigated by management, internal audit, or through the disciplinary process

In more serious matters the school at this point will refer to the LA for guidance on the next steps to be taken.

Staff should note that should the issue need to be disclosed to the police or courts your identity as disclosure will need to be shared.

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