

**St. Robert Southwell Catholic
Primary School
A school in the trusteeship of**



Diocese of Westminster



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Adopted by governors on: 7th July 2009

Reviewed & Reapproved by the Governing Board: May 2017

Next Review: May 2018

Responsible Person: Resource Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. A. ...', written over a horizontal line.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to create an educating Christian community which reflects the values of the Gospel within the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church;

- a community which will develop the whole person
- a community which works closely with parents and parish
- a community which values each child as a unique individual with particular gifts and needs
- a forward looking community which serves its members and the wider society
- a community in which we will lead those in our care to grow in their faith whilst benefiting from an enriching education.



St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School

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WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY (Public Interest Disclosure Policy)

1 Preamble

The school is a Catholic school, founded by and forming part of the Catholic Church. In addition to the Church's funds which established the school, it is sustained in its mission by receipt of public funds. Accordingly it is accountable to the Catholic community of which it is a part and which provided the school and to the public whose funds it expends.

The school is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees and others with whom we deal, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the school's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

This policy makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage. This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the school in the first instance so that it is not necessary to resort to outside agencies.

2 Aims and Scope of this Policy

The Governors of St Robert Southwell School are committed to tackling all forms of malpractice, fraud etc and treat these issues seriously. The Governors recognise that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and have therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the school.

The Governors are committed to creating a climate of trust and openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved.

The provisions of the policy apply to matters of suspected malpractice and fraud and not matters of more general grievance which would be dealt with under the school's grievance procedures.

The legal background relating to "whistleblowing" is covered by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which affords protection against dismissal penalty where an employee discloses in good faith, with reasonable grounds for belief in the disclosure, certain information relating to the following examples:-



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There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment. This policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- conduct which is an offence, a breach of the law or contrary to Church teaching;
- disclosures related to miscarriages of justice;
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees;
- damage to the environment;
- the unauthorised use of public or Church funds;
- possible fraud and corruption;
- abuse of students; or
- other unethical or immoral conduct.

Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees or governors of the school or others acting on behalf of the school can be reported under this policy. This may be something that makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the values, beliefs and standards to which the school subscribes; is against the school's trust deed or instrument of government or policies; falls below established standards of practice; or amounts to improper conduct.

3 Safeguards

The school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence you or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that might affect you.

4 Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness. You also have a duty to observe this confidentiality.



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5 Anonymous Allegations

You are encouraged to put your name to your allegation wherever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the school. In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account will include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised;
- the credibility of the concern and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

6 Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

7 How to Raise a Concern

If you reasonably believe that you have discovered serious malpractice within the school you should ideally raise these concerns with your line manager. However, if, for whatever reason this is not possible or appropriate, you should contact the headteacher.

You will be given the opportunity to discuss your suspicions and an appropriate person will be designated as investigating officer, who will arrange for an investigation to take place.

If you suspect that the headteacher may be involved in the malpractice then you should contact the chair of the governing body. If you also suspect involvement by the chair, then you should contact the Diocesan Director of Education.

Where there are genuine and justified suspicions of wrong doing, even though at the time of "whistleblowing" there is no concrete evidence of serious wrong doing, this should not deter anyone from going ahead and reporting the matter, particularly where it may involve potential risk to vulnerable people.

Within ten working days of your initial meeting, the investigating officer will write to confirm the details of your concern and that an investigation will take place. Throughout the investigation, you will be kept informed of progress and you will normally be advised of the eventual outcome, subject to third party



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rights. All correspondence will be addressed to your home. If a meeting is needed, it may be arranged off site if you wish, and a union representative or a friend may accompany you. Although records will need to be kept as the enquiries progress, these will be of an anonymous nature.

There can be no prescribed time limits for completion of the investigative process, but it will obviously be in the interests of all concerned if the issue is resolved without delay.

The Governing Body encourages the "whistleblower" to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and give an explanation for the behaviour or activity.

The Governing Body have designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with whistleblowing and if the "whistleblower" feels that appropriate action has not been undertaken after following the actions in paragraphs (b) and (c) above then the matter should be referred to one of those the individuals:-

If you have any complaint about the way in which the investigation is being handled then you should raise this with the designated investigating officer in the first instance. If the complaint remains unresolved then you may contact the Diocesan Director of Education with your concerns.

What Should A Line Manager Do When A Complaint Is Received?

- (a) It is essential that problems raised are tackled effectively and quickly and with the aim of righting wrongs, this may well be best achieved in many less serious cases by discussion with the "offending" employee and securing a commitment as to future standards and corrective action. In other more serious cases, the matter may well have to be referred to a senior manager. It may be necessary to instigate disciplinary proceedings.
- (b) Any written complaint/allegation should be given a written acknowledgement and confirmation that the matter will be looked into. Unless clearly made in a very low key way about minor matters, verbal complaints/allegations should receive a written acknowledgement in the same way.
- (c) In the event of the allegation being of a serious nature e.g. relating to a fraud or other gross misconduct offence, there may well be a need to involve other colleagues immediately. This should normally be agreed initially by the Chair of Governors and/or the



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Headteacher who, in turn, should keep the Chief Financial Officer informed.

- (d) When any complaint or allegation has been looked into and resolved or dealt with, the person who raised the matter in the first instance should be notified – normally in writing unless common-sense indicates that it can be done more appropriately verbally. How much detail to provide in such cases is a matter of judgement.

Protecting “Whistleblowers” And Complainants

- (a) “Whistleblowers” have an expectation that their identity can be kept concealed. In the majority of cases this may be possible, but in more serious cases where disciplinary action may have to be taken against an individual, it may well be judged that they have a right to know the source as well as the nature of such complaints. In any case the Governing Body is committed to doing as much as possible to ensure that the well being of the “whistleblower” at work does not suffer as a result of the tensions that may result from the making of or investigation of complaints.
- (b) Individuals are encouraged to bring to the attention of their managers any harassment or victimisation they may suffer as a result of whistleblowing. All necessary action will be taken to ensure that such harassment or victimisation is stopped.
- (c) It may be that “whistleblowers” will find the process of reporting wrong-doing and making statements etc stressful, particularly where there may be feelings of divided loyalties. In such cases the opportunity should be given for the “whistleblower” to talk through these anxieties and feelings, either with their manager or possibly, someone from an external counselling service. The Governing Body encourages this action.

When the investigation is complete a report will be presented to the governing body, which will decide upon the appropriate course of action. Subject to any relevant legal constraints, you will be informed of the action to be taken. If you do not agree with the outcome then you will have seven days in which to make your concerns known to the governing body, via the chairman. If you remain dissatisfied with the response from the governing body, then you may consider contacting the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, who has the power to intervene if the governing body appears to be acting unreasonably. You should be aware, however, that this course of action could have serious implications for the school.



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At no stage should you contact the media without the written permission of the Chairman of the Governing Body. Such action would be a breach of confidentiality and could result in disciplinary proceedings against you.

Whistle Blowing Conclusion

Existing good practice within the school in terms of its systems of internal control, both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the school operates will ensure that cases of malpractice rarely occur. This whistleblowing policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally, and if necessary outside the management structure of the school.

This document is a public commitment by the Governing Body that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.

8 List of Contacts

Head Teacher

Ms Honor Beck

(head@robsouth.brent.sch.uk)

Chair of the Governing Body

Mr Peter Manning

(peter@pjpm.info)

Clerk to the Governing Body

Ms Magdalena Lim

(mlim@robsouth.brent.sch.uk)

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Archdiocese of Westminster
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020 7 798 9005

Secretary of State for Children,
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Dept for Education & Skills
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT
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If you require an urgent response please contact the School office on 020 8204 6148 and request that either the Clerk or Chair of Governors contact you directly.