



Muscliff Primary School

Whistle Blowing Policy

Approved by: RMC (written in conjunction with HR Sept 25)

Last reviewed on: November 2025

Next review due by: November 2026

Scope:

This policy is designed to enable employees or other members of the School to raise concerns or disclose information at a higher level which the individual believes shows malpractice.

A number of policies and procedures are already in place including grievance, discipline, complaints and guidelines for dealing with harassment. This policy is intended to cover concerns which are in the public interest and may (at least initially) be investigated separately but might then lead to the using of such procedures.

Members of staff may be the first to spot anything that is seriously wrong within the school. However, they might not say anything because they think this would be disloyal, or they might be worried that their suspicions are not justified. They may also be worried that they or someone else may be victimised. Members of the public (for example, parents of students) may also share some of these concerns.

Purpose:

Our school is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, the school encourages employees with serious concerns about the school's work to come forward and voice those concerns. This also applies to concerns about the activities of staff, Governors and external organizations in their dealings with the school.

We are committed to being open, honest and accountable and this policy aims to make sure that if you want to raise any concern, you can do so with confidence and without having to worry about being victimized, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- › Encourage individuals affected to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and that their confidentiality will be respected
- › Let all staff in the trust know how to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing in or by the trust
- › Set clear procedures for how the trust will respond to such concerns
- › Let all staff know the protection available to them if they raise a whistle-blowing concern
- › Assure staff that they will not be victimised for raising a legitimate concern through the steps set out in the policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken (though vexatious or malicious concerns may be considered a disciplinary issue)

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. The policy applies to all employees or other workers who provide services to the trust in any capacity, including self-employed consultants or contractors who provide services on a personal basis and agency workers.

2. Legislation

The requirement to have clear whistle-blowing procedures in place is set out in the [Academy Trust Handbook](#).

This policy has been written in line with the above document, as well as [government guidance on whistle-blowing](#). We also take into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definition of whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing covers concerns made that report wrongdoing that is "in the public interest". Examples of whistle-blowing include (but are not limited to):

- › Criminal offences, such as fraud or corruption
- › Pupils' or staff health and safety being put in danger
- › Pupils being mistreated
- › Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- › Breaches of financial management procedures
- › A person being discriminated against because of their race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, sexuality, class or home life
- › Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest
- › Damage to the environment

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above.

Not all concerns about the School count as whistleblowing. For example, personal staff grievances such as bullying or harassment do not usually count as whistleblowing. If something affects a staff member as an individual, or relates to an individual employment contract, this is likely a grievance.

When staff have a concern, they should consider whether it would be better to follow our staff grievance or complaints procedures.

Protecting You

If your allegation is true, you have nothing to fear, but we understand that deciding to blow the whistle is not easy. If you raise a concern which you believe is true, we will take appropriate action under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 to protect you from any harassment, victimization or bullying. We will keep your concerns confidential if this is what you want. In this case we will not reveal your name or position without your permission or unless we have to do so by law. We would explain this at the time you raise a concern so you can decide whether or not to proceed.

If you work for the school, you should also know that any allegation you make will not influence, or be influenced by, any unrelated disciplinary action against you or any redundancy procedures that may affect you.

Anonymous allegations

Because we will protect you (as explained above), we encourage you to give your name when you make an allegation. Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective and if, for example, we do not have enough information, we may not be able to investigate the matter at all

Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) has:

- › [Further guidance](#) on the difference between a whistle-blowing concern and a grievance that staff may find useful if unsure
- › A free and confidential [advice line](#)
- ›

4. Procedure for staff to raise a whistle-blowing concern

4.1 When to raise a concern

Staff should consider the examples in section 3 when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or trust procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

4.2 Who to report to

School-based staff should report their concern to the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Chair of Governors (via Charlotte Blanch, Governance Professional)

4.3 How to raise the concern

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

5. Procedure for responding to a whistle-blowing concern

5.1 Investigating the concern

When a concern is received by the Headteacher – referred to from here as the 'recipient' – they will:

- › Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative
- › Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information. If it becomes apparent the concern is not of a whistle-blowing nature, the recipient should handle the concern in line with the appropriate policy/procedure
- › Reiterate, at this meeting, that they are protected from any unfair treatment or risk of dismissal as a result of raising the concern. If the concern is found to be malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action may be taken (see section 6 of this policy)
- › Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there is:
 - The recipient should then arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the Chair of Trustees and HR, if appropriate. In some cases, they may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In others, they may need to report the matter to the police

- The person who raised the concern should be informed of how the matter is being investigated and an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps

5.2 Outcome of the investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred. The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, the Headteacher, trustees and other staff, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

Whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

6. Malicious or vexatious allegations

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns when they believe there to potentially be an issue. If an allegation is made in good faith, but the investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the trust will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

7. Escalating concerns beyond the school

The school encourages staff to raise their concerns internally, in line with section 4 of this policy, but recognises that staff may feel the need to report concerns to an external body.

The Protect advice line, linked to in section 3 of this policy, can also help staff when deciding whether to raise the concern to an external party.

8. Approval

This policy will be reviewed every year

The Resource Management Committee of the Governing Body is responsible for overseeing the operation of this policy and for ensuring that appropriate records are maintained regarding concerns raised and the outcomes.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- › Staff grievance policy
- › Complaints procedure
- › Safeguarding policy

