

Whistle Blowing Policy Guidance

The John Harrox Primary School



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The John Harrox Primary School Whistleblowing Policy

This guidance is written for all members of staff and governors at The John Harrox Primary School and is in line with the LCC policy document on whistleblowing).

Whistleblowing refers to the disclosure internally or externally by staff and governors of malpractice, as well as illegal acts or omissions at work. It is about helping people to have a voice to raise legitimate concerns or worries about the school's or individual's activities and practices.

Staff and governors must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies (See section 'How to raise concerns').

Reasons for concern

Examples of issues which might be raised, would include:

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law
- sexual or physical abuse of children and staff
- disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- health and safety risks, including risks to the children, staff and the public
- damage to the environment
- the unauthorised use school funds
- possible fraud or corruption
- unethical conduct

Or it may be something that:

- makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards
- is against the official policies
- is unlawful
- amounts to improper conduct

Reasons for whistleblowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from whistleblowing?

- Starting chain of events which spirals
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed.

Remember – Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right

How to raise a concern

- 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
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why
- Approach your immediate line manager, Headteacher or Chair of Governors
- If your concern is about your immediate line manager, Headteacher or Chair of Governors, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact LCC (LCC, PO Box 640, Lincoln, LN1 1WF – 0800 0853716 – Concern_Hot_Line@lincolnshire.gov.uk)
- Make sure you receive a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest.
- Ideally, concerns should be put in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Self reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager or Headteacher so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned.

Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager, Headteacher, Chair of Governors, LCC or union representative.

Approved by the Governors

February 2024