

GODWIN JUNIOR SCHOOL



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Date agreed by Governors	March 2013
Reviewed	Autumn 2015
Reviewed	Autumn 2017
Reviewed	Autumn 2019
Reviewed	Autumn 2021
Next review	Autumn 2023

Linked Documents
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
Complaints Policy



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articles which inform this policy are:

- Article 3: The best interest of the child must be top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
- Article 12: Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.
- Article 19: Children must be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment.

Purpose: To prepare pupils for lifelong success

Vision: At Godwin Junior School we:

- Value everyone
- Instil a love of learning
- Seek and encourage talent
- Inspire resilient learners
- Open minds to develop responsible global citizens
- Nurture confident, articulate individuals

RATIONALE

From April 2002 the Fair Funding Regulations require LAs to set out a procedure to be followed by all persons working at a school, including teachers, support workers, agency workers or school governors who wish to complain about financial management, financial probity or any other malpractice at the school and how such complaints should be dealt with.

Godwin Junior School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and strictly complies with the requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended in 2007), the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 and the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2014.

This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable those covered by the policy to raise serious concerns at an early stage, in the right way and to do so without fear of recrimination, victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage. Whistleblowers are protected from suffering a detriment, bullying or harassment from another employee(s).

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for our children. We do, however, recognise that sometimes allegations of abuse are made.

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SCOPE

The legislation provides protection for workers who disclose information that is specifically 'in the public interest' which might otherwise be regarded as confidential, if the disclosure falls into one of the categories outlined below:

- A criminal offence is being, or is about to be committed
- The employer has failed, is failing or about to fail to comply with his/her legal obligations
- A miscarriage of justice has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen
- An individual's health and safety has been, is likely to be or is being jeopardised
- The environment is, has been or is likely to be damaged
- Information falling into any of the above categories has been, is being, or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

A consequence of the "public interest" requirement is that employees will generally be precluded from being able to "blow the whistle" about breaches of their of their own employment contract. Such a complaint should be made via the Grievance procedure.

By adopting this policy Godwin is reassuring the workforce that they can safely raise concerns about malpractice internally. This will enable the school to investigate and deal with such concerns and continue to foster a responsible and accountable culture.

Staff and governors are expected to notify the school of any reasonable and genuine concern they may have about an abuse of the school's stated standards, malpractice, theft, fraud, financial abuse, criminal offences, breach of legal obligations, dereliction of the school's health and safety responsibilities, damage to the environment, other unethical conduct or the cover up of any of these.

Staff and governors have a duty to notify the school of any concerns regarding the welfare, well-being, safety or potential risk to children. The procedure for raising concerns in the normal way is documented in the school's Early Help, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy but where staff have a concern about the conduct of another member of staff they must notify the school using the Whistleblowing Policy.

It is recognised that some allegations made under the Whistleblowing Policy will proceed on a confidential basis. Every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the individual who raises concern, without their permission.

The policy is not designed to replace the following:
Grievance, Disciplinary or Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures.
School's Complaints Procedure.

Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures will normally be referred to for consideration under these procedures.

The policy is only about employees and governors and other statutory reporting procedures that may apply. The Whistleblowing Policy is primarily to protect the interests of others or of the school.

It is accepted that there may be occasions when a concern turns out to be unfounded but was raised in good faith. The school will not take action against the individual in these circumstances. If an allegation was unfounded and it was clear that it had been raised frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, then that individual may face disciplinary action.

The school and its governors are committed to treating claims of impropriety seriously, irrespective of who the alleged perpetrators are. In all cases the school will seek the most appropriate sanction against individuals that it considers guilty of malpractice. This includes dismissing employees, taking civil action and in conjunction with the law enforcement agencies, instituting criminal proceedings.

The aim of the Whistleblowing Policy is to enable employees to raise their concerns in-house and to be assured that action will be taken quickly and effectively. It should not be necessary, in most cases, to take concerns outside the school and especially to the media. Staff have a duty of confidentiality towards the school. It is a serious matter to disclose confidential information.

HOW THE SCHOOL WILL HANDLE CONCERNS RAISED

Step 1 – How to raise a concern

There are a number of agreed contacts for employees to raise concerns with under the Whistleblowing Policy. This enables the employee to choose the person with whom they wish to make the disclosure.

Employees who have a concern about any wrongdoing should normally raise their concerns with their Line Manager. If, however, they feel unable to raise the matter with their line manager, they may raise the concern with the Head Teacher, or another senior member of school staff. If they feel unable to raise their concern with any member of the school leadership, they may raise it with the Chair of Governors, Kam Hudson, via email: kam.hudson@godwin.newham.sch.uk or with Schools HR (NPW): 020 8249 6900.

Concerns may be raised orally, or in writing. The person should make it clear whether they wish to raise the matter in confidence. The person to whom the concern was raised may have a preliminary meeting with the whistle-blower to discuss the most appropriate route. This person may bring a friend/union representative to any meeting that is arranged in connection with the concern they have raised, as long as the friend/union representative is not involved in the matter and that the friend agrees to maintain confidentiality.

If the whistle-blower has a concern about a governor, they should speak to the Chair of Governors. If they feel unable to raise their concern with them, they should contact Schools HR (NPW): 020 8249 6900.

If the concern is being raised by a school governor, they should speak to the Chair of Governors. If the governor feels unable to raise the matter with them for good reason, Schools HR, NPW should be contacted with the complaint: 020 8249 6900.

The whistle-blower is not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation. However, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for the concern and that it is in the public interest.

The school hopes that this policy gives the reassurance that a person would need to raise concerns internally. However, it recognises that there may be circumstances where progressing through the internal route has failed and the whistle-blower can only report their concern to external bodies that have responsibilities to monitor the school's compliance to its own standards and legal obligations. In most cases this would be the school's auditors, Price Waterhouse Coopers: 020 7583 5000.

Step 2 - What happens after a concern has been raised

The appointed person, while maintaining the confidentiality of the complainant, will ensure that any individual who is the subject of the allegation is given details of the allegation, in order to respond.

Once the concern has been raised, the person receiving the whistleblowing allegation will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated properly. The nature of the investigation will depend upon the concern raised.

The person receiving the whistleblowing concern is responsible for ensuring the whistle-blower receives feedback on progress, subject to any issues of confidentiality that may be necessary to guarantee a

successful conclusion. It may not be possible to inform the whistle-blower of the precise action undertaken where this would infringe on a duty of confidence owed by the school to another party.

SAFEGUARDS

The school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. The school will take appropriate action to safeguard the whistle-blower from any recrimination or victimisation as a result of raising a genuine concern. In turn, the employee/governor is required to follow this procedure.

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the whistle-blower's identity, if they so wish. However, in some circumstances this person may be needed to come forward as a witness.

The whistle-blower is encouraged to put their name to their concern wherever possible. Concerns expressed where the complainant wishes to remain anonymous are much less powerful but the school will consider anonymous concerns on a case-by-case basis.

INDEPENDENT ADVICE AND HELPLINE

If a person is unsure whether to use the school's Whistleblowing Policy, or they want independent advice at any stage, they may contact the independent charity: Protect, an organisation that seeks to ensure that concerns about serious malpractice are properly raised and addressed in the workplace. Their staff will give free expert and confidential advice about how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work using a Whistleblowing Policy. Their contact details are: 020 7404 6609.

Trade Unions encourage their members to contact them for advice before they take action in accordance with the policy.

The act of seeking confidential advice is solely a matter between the parties concerned and will not of itself be grounds for disciplinary action.

RESPONSIBLE BODIES AND MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for this policy.

The Head Teacher is responsible for the operation of the policy within the school and the overall maintenance of a record of concerns raised in accordance with this policy and the outcomes.

The LA is responsible for the operation of the policy and records outside the school.

All staff will be advised of this policy and where to access it.

This Policy is in accordance with that of the Local Authority and was devised in consultation with Trades Unions and will be reviewed similarly.