



## BEECHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

### BEECHWOOD SCHOOL ADOPTS...HBC CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE "WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY"

This policy is in line with the HBC Confidential Reporting Code which contains the full detail of actions to be taken when appropriate.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1. 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.
2. The school is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability.
3. In line with that commitment we expect employees, to come forward and voice concerns.
4. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
5. This policy document makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This Confidential Reporting Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the school rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.
6. The policy applies to all employees and those contractors working for the school on school premises, for example, agency staff, builders, drivers.

#### 2. AIMS OF THIS POLICY

This policy aims to:

- encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied
- reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation.

The Policy of Conduct for Local Government Employees states that

*"Employees will be expected through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service. Employees must report to the appropriate manager any impropriety or breach of procedure."*

This Policy supports that statement.

#### 3. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

- There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment. The Confidential Reporting Policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures, and this policy does not replace the Corporate Complaints Policy.
- actions or behaviour that makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe the school subscribes to; for example or
- is against the school's Standing Orders and policies; or
- falls below established standards of practice; or
- amounts to improper conduct; or
- Conduct which is a criminal offence or a breach of the law; or
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice; or
- Dangerous procedures risking health and safety, including risks to the public, service users and to other employees; or

- Damage to the environment; or
- The unauthorised use of public funds; or
- Fraud and corruption; or
- Sexual or physical abuse of service users; or
- Other unethical conduct.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive but gives examples of malpractice. The overriding concern for the employer and employee should be that it would be in the public interest for the malpractice to be corrected and if appropriate sanctions taken.

#### **4. SAFEGUARDS AGAINST HARRASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION**

- i. The school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, or your suspicion reasonable, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you are providing a service.
- ii. The school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation. .

#### **5. CONFIDENTIALITY**

1. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish.
2. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.
3. The employee disclosing a concern should ensure that they only inform the person identified in part 8 below. Other than that the employee is required to keep the matter disclosed confidential.
4. The person to whom the matter is disclosed will treat it confidentially, as far as is reasonably practicable.

#### **6. ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS**

- i. This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.
- ii. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the school.

#### **7. 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.

#### **8. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN**

- i. As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate manager or their superior.
- ii. Concerns may be raised orally or in writing.
- iii. The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take action.
- iv. Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.
- v. Advice/guidance on how to pursue matters of concern may be obtained from:
  - Headteacher
  - Deputy Headteacher
- vi. 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.

#### **9. HOW THE SCHOOL WILL RESPOND**

- i. 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.
- ii. Where appropriate, the matters raised may be:
  - Investigated by management
  - Investigated by Chair of Governors, investigated by a panel of Governors
  - Progressed through the disciplinary process
  - Referred to the Police

- Referred to the LA
  - The subject of an independent enquiry
  - Dealt with via any other appropriate procedure.
- iii. In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.
- iv. If someone is suspended, the person reporting under this policy will be informed.
- v. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
- vi. Within five working days of a concern being raised, the Headteacher will write to you.
- acknowledging that the concern has been received
  - indicating how we propose to deal with the matter
  - giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a full response
  - telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made
  - supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms, and
  - telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.
- vii. The amount of contact between you and the officers considering the issues will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the school will seek further information from you.
- viii. Where any meeting is arranged, off-site if you so wish, you can be accompanied by a union or professional association representative or a friend.
- ix. The school will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings the Council will arrange for you to receive advice about the procedure.
- x. The Council accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, we will inform you of the outcome of any investigation.

#### **10. THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICER**

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy.

#### **11. HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER**

- i. This policy is intended to provide you with an avenue within the school to raise concerns. The school hopes you will be satisfied with any action taken. If you are not and if you feel it is right to take the matter outside the school. Ways forward are identified in the LA's Whistle Blowing Policy obtainable from Headteacher.
- ii. If you do take the matter outside the School, you should ensure that you do not disclose confidential information. Check with the contact point about that.

**Signed:**

**(Headteacher/Chair of Governors)**

Date: October 2016

Date for Review: October 2020