



Crockerton Church of England Primary School

Potters Hill, Crockerton, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 8AB

Web: www.crockerton.wilts.sch.uk Tel: 01985 212168

Headteacher: Mrs Nic Ilic

VISION STATEMENT

Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in peace and harmony.

2 Corinthians 13:11

Whistleblowing Policy

This is a single policy which has been written on behalf of the Governing Body for Crockerton Church of England VA Primary School.

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Reviewed	September 2023
Author	Wiltshire Council & Headteacher
Review Cycle and Approval	2 Years Governing Body
Next Review	September 2025

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Schools

Policy Statement

1. Wiltshire Council and our school are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. This whistleblowing policy and procedure supports this commitment.
2. Relevant trade unions and professional organisations have been consulted about this policy and procedure, and it has their support.

Scope

3. It gives employees and others with genuine concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing in the school or council a way to voice those concerns without fear of victimisation.
4. Often it is those closest to an organisation who realise that there is something wrong. Sometimes people are reluctant to act upon their concerns because they think that they are being disloyal, or because they are afraid that they might be victimised if they speak up.
5. There are existing procedures in place (e.g. Grievance, and Dignity at Work Policies) which make provision for employees to lodge a concern relating to their own employment. This whistleblowing policy is intended to complement those procedures by covering concerns that appear to fall outside their scope. This concern may be about something that is:
 - Unlawful, including financial or fraudulent malpractice such as embezzlement, bribery, corruption, dishonesty, etc
 - Against establishment standards of practice
 - Improper conduct.
6. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures, e.g. child protection or financial irregularities will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
7. The Local Authority will not accept liability for any actions, claims, costs or expenses arising out of a school's decision not to follow this policy where it is found that the school's Governing Body has been negligent or has acted in an unfair or discriminatory manner.

Definitions

8. A 'nominated governor' is the governor identified by the governing body as the first point of contact for whistleblowing queries. The nominated governor could be the Chair of Governors or another governor (but not a staff governor).

Aims

9. The purpose of this policy is to provide you with the help and support you need to speak up and be confident that you can do so safely. We will take your concerns seriously and ensure that they are dealt with promptly and fairly.

How to raise a concern

School :	Crockerton CE VA Primary School
Named internal contact :	Gussie Kerr Bonner (Chair of Governors)

10. Initial concerns should be raised with the nominated governor. If the employee believes that this governor is implicated then the employee should approach the Chair of Governors if they are not the nominated governor. If the Chair of governors is the nominated governor then they should approach the Vice Chair of Governors.
11. Within 48 hours, the nominated governor will contact you to arrange to meet you to discuss your concerns. Before the meeting, it would be helpful if you write down what you consider the problem to be, giving names, dates and places where possible. If there are any other documents that you think might be helpful, please try to bring these with you. You are advised to take a friend, colleague or school professional association / union representative with you to the meeting with the governor.

12. You are encouraged to raise your concern in person, or through your professional association / union representative on your behalf, because concerns that are expressed anonymously are difficult to investigate. However, the school will exercise its discretion in deciding whether to investigate an anonymous allegation. The factors taken into account will include:
- the seriousness of the issues raised;
 - the credibility of the allegation; and
 - the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation from attributable sources.

How we will respond

13. After the initial meeting, the nominated governor will arrange for discreet initial enquiries to be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so, what form it should take.
14. The nominated governor will write to you within 10 days of your initial meeting to:
- acknowledge that your concern has been received
 - outline our understanding of what the issues are; and
 - indicate how we propose to deal with the matter.
15. If the nominated governor decides that it is appropriate for an investigation to be carried out, this will either be done by them, or by a governor who is asked to investigate – the investigating officer. However, it may sometimes be necessary for a concern to be referred to the police, an external auditor, or for it to be the subject of an independent enquiry. In addition, where it is established that the complaint involves issues of bullying or unlawful discrimination, it will be necessary to involve the school's Human Resources provider.
16. If an investigation is carried out, you will always be informed of the final outcome. It might not be possible to give you full details of the outcome if it contains personal details of a third party, because we have a duty to protect personal information under the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016

How will the school treat whistleblowers?

17. If you make an allegation in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If you knowingly make malicious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against you.
18. Disciplinary action will be taken against any member of staff who tries to stop another employee from raising a concern or who is responsible for any act of recrimination or victimisation against an employee who raises a concern.
19. Where an employee may have been party themselves to an act of possible gross misconduct on which they are now 'blowing the whistle' this could be considered in mitigation. They are not, however, exempt from disciplinary action.
20. Disciplinary action may be taken against employees if they contact the media with concerns about conduct at work without first following the steps set out in this policy.
21. The Governing Body will make every effort to protect an employee's identity when s/he raises a concern and does not want her/his name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated however, that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by the employee may be required as part of the evidence.
22. If you raise a concern, you will be given the opportunity to feed back any issues or problems you may have experienced as a result. The purpose of this is to ensure that employees who have raised concerns in good faith do not suffer as a result.

Queries

23. If you have any queries about this policy please contact the Headteacher and / or Chair of Governors.

Below is the Wiltshire Whistleblowing Procedure that the School will follow:

Whistleblowing Procedure for Schools

Introduction

1. All schools and academy trusts are required to have appropriate procedures in place for handling whistleblowing and for ensuring school staff and volunteers know who they can contact if they wish to raise a concern.
2. This document explains the types of concerns that can be raised under this procedure, the legal protection for whistle-blowers and how whistleblowing concerns will be handled.
3. This procedure should be followed for any whistleblowing matters raised by employees of the school, volunteers, supply staff and agency workers.
4. The term 'head teacher' has been used throughout this procedure, however depending on the size and structure of the school the head teacher's role in the procedure may be delegated to other members of the senior leadership team, school business managers or line managers as appropriate. Where the head teacher is subject to these procedures, it will be managed by the Chair of the governing body.

Policy Statement

5. Wiltshire Council and the school are committed to the highest possible standards of:
 - openness and inclusiveness
 - accountability and
 - integrity.

What is Whistleblowing?

6. Whistleblowing is when an employee or volunteer raises concerns about poor or unsafe practice, misconduct and/or potential failures in the school's systems and processes.
7. The wrongdoing disclosed must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others, e.g., pupils, general public
8. The wrongdoing must relate to or show one of the following:
 - a criminal offence
 - a failure to comply with a legal obligation
 - a possible miscarriage of justice
 - a Health & Safety risk
 - actions causing, or likely to cause damage to the environment
 - misuse of public money
 - corruption or unethical conduct
 - failing to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
 - deliberate concealment of any of these matters

- any other substantial and relevant concern.
9. The concern could be about something that happened in the past, is currently happening or likely to happen in the future.
 10. Concerns or complaints that employees wish to raise formally, about their own employment, should normally be raised using the school's Grievance Procedure, unless the employee believes the concern is in the public interest. This includes for example, concerns related to working conditions, working relations, employment rights or bullying or harassment.

Aim of procedure

11. Encourage those working and volunteering in the school to report suspected wrongdoing promptly, in the knowledge that it will be taken seriously.
12. Provide guidance on how to raise concerns
13. Reassure staff that they are able to raise genuine concerns made in the public interest without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken
14. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures should be put in place for such concerns to be raised with the school's senior leadership team.

Legal protection for whistle blowers

15. It can be difficult for an employee or worker to make the decision to report a concern. If a concern is raised in good faith and based on reasonable belief, there should be nothing to fear.
16. The school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect an individual when they raise a concern even if they are genuinely mistaken in their concerns. Any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower would result in disciplinary action against the person responsible.
17. Under The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998, workers are protected from dismissal or other detriment as long as they follow their employers whistleblowing procedure. Any investigations arising from whistleblowing will not influence or be influenced by any other procedures to which an employee may be subject.

False and malicious allegations

18. The school will protect itself and its employees from false and malicious expressions of concern by taking disciplinary action where appropriate. The school will try to ensure that the negative impact of either malicious or unfounded allegation about any person is minimised.

Procedure for raising a whistleblowing concern

19. Whistleblowing anonymously or confidentially

20. Concerns can be raised anonymously, but the school or person receiving the allegation may not be able to take it further if they haven't been provided with all the information they need.
21. Whistle blowers can give their name but request confidentiality and, in these circumstances, every effort will be made to protect their identity.
22. Where an employee has requested that their identity is not to be revealed, the school will discuss the matter with them before embarking on any course of action whereby their identity will need to be disclosed.
23. All disclosures made under this procedure will be treated sensitively, consistently, and fairly.

Step 1- Reporting the concern

24. Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing.
25. You can raise your concern the headteacher. If you are raising a concern about the headteacher then the matter should go directly to the Chair of Governors.
26. Whistleblowing concerns should be raised with the school's Head Teacher this is: Nic Ilic Head Teacher
27. Where a staff member or volunteer feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:
28. If you wish to report the matter to someone outside of the school, you can contact:
 - the Head of School Effectiveness at Wiltshire Council or
 - any of the other local authority officers listed in Annex 1 or
 - one of the external bodies/organisations listed in Annex 2.
 - the [NSPCC's whistleblowing helpline](#) – it is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally, or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk.
29. Reporting concerns to the media, in most cases will lead to the loss of your whistleblowing law rights.
30. Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of your concerns, you will need to demonstrate that you have sufficient evidence or other reasonable grounds to raise them.
31. You may wish to obtain advice from a trade union representative or the Citizen's Advice Bureau.
32. You can be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague to any meetings that are required.

Step 2

33. The person with whom you have raised your concern, will decide what action is needed. They may ask you to provide further information. They will write to you within 10 working days to let you know how your concern will be dealt with.
34. The information you can expect to receive is:
 - an indication of how the concern will be dealt with
 - an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
 - whether any initial enquiries have been made
 - whether further investigations will take place, and if not why
 - information about support available for you.
35. The person with whom you have raised your concern will at the same time notify the schools' HR Adviser that a whistleblowing allegation has been made.
36. Advice on dealing with concerns is available from the school's HR Adviser, legal or financial adviser.

Step 3

37. Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate.
38. An investigation may be carried out, depending on the nature of the allegations and the evidence/information presented. Full details of the investigation may be withheld from you to protect the confidentiality of other people.
39. Information will need to be passed on to those with a legitimate need to have this information and it may be necessary for you to provide a written statement and act as a witness in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings or enquiry. This will be discussed with you first.
40. Where an investigation is necessary, it may take the form of one or more of the following:
 - an internal investigation by the head teacher or a governor, which may, for example, take the form of a disciplinary investigation
 - an investigation by the Internal Audit Service
 - a referral to the Police
 - the setting up of an external independent inquiry.

Step 4

41. You will be informed of the outcome of any investigation, in writing, and/or of any action taken, subject to the constraints of confidentiality and the law.
42. If you do not feel your concern has been addressed adequately you may raise it with an independent body such as:
 - the Head of School Effectiveness at Wiltshire Council or
 - any of the other local authority officers listed in Annex 1 or
 - one of the external bodies/organisations listed in Annex 2.

43. If there is an issue of an exceptionally serious nature which you believe to be substantially true, then you may disclose the issue to someone other than those listed in paragraph 21. In determining whether it is reasonable for you to have made a disclosure the identity of the person to whom the disclosure is made will be taken into account. Disclosures to anyone outside of the recognised bodies listed in paragraphs 35 and Annex 1 and 2 may not be protected disclosures under the Act.
44. You have a duty to the school not to disclose confidential information. This does not prevent you from seeking independent advice at any stage or from discussing the issue with the charity Protect (previously called Public Concern at Work) on 020 3117 2520 or www.protect-advice.org.uk in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Review and Reporting of the Procedure

45. For maintained and voluntary controlled schools Human Resources have overall responsibility for this procedure.
46. For voluntary aided and foundation schools the responsibility will lie with the Governing Body, and for academies with the Academy Trust.
47. This procedure has been reviewed with reference to equalities, human rights and discrimination legislation. Confidential monitoring of the procedures is undertaken in order to gather data to help establish whether the procedure is operated in a fair and consistent manner. In undertaking monitoring the school will not identify individuals.
48. This procedure will be regularly reviewed by the HR Department to ensure that it continues to remain compliant and meets the needs of schools and those working in schools.

Annex 1 - Contact list for Wiltshire County Council

Address:	Wiltshire Council, County Hall
HR Operations Manager	Jane.margetts@wiltshire.gov.uk
Director of Education and Skills	Helean.hughes@wiltshire.gov.uk
Head of School Effectiveness	Andrew.best@wiltshire.gov.uk
Health and Safety Team for Schools	Paul.collyer@wiltshire.gov.uk
Strategic Financial Support Manager Finance & Procurement	Grant.davis@wiltshire.gov.uk

Annex 2 - External bodies and organisations

You can blow the whistle to an external organisation rather than your employer. There is a list of prescribed people or bodies that you can go to.

Choose the correct one for your issue. A full list can be found online at Gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies-2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies>

Some of the bodies that may be relevant for school staff are:

- **Ofsted**
WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 3155
Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
- **Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation**
Complaints Investigation Manager, Ofqual, Earlsdon Park, 53-55 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH.
Tel: 0300 303 3344
Email: whistleblowing@ofqual.gov.uk
Online reform form: www.ofqual.gov.uk/complaints-and-appeals/whistleblowing/
- **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)**
The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is for anyone with child protection concerns in the workplace. The helpline provides support and advice to those who feel unable to get a child protection issue addressed by their employer. It can be contacted anonymously on 0800 028 0285.
[NSPCC's whistleblowing helpline](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing)
- **Health and Safety Executive**
Tel: 0300 790 6787
www.hse.gov.uk
- **The Local Government Ombudsman**
Address: PO Box 4771, Coventry. CV4 0EH
www.lgo.org.uk
Tel: 0300 061 0614
- **Data Protection and Freedom of Information**
The Office of the Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF
Tel: 0303 123 1113
- **Secretary of State for Education**
Ministerial and Public Communications Division, Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
Tel: 0370 000 2288
Website: www.gov.uk/contact-dfe
- **Equality and Human Rights Commission**
Tel: 0161 829 8100
Email: whistleblowing@equalityhumanrights.com

Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com/whistleblowing