

Front Street Primary School



Reporting Code
(Whistleblowing)
2023

Confidential Reporting Code

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Front Street Primary School and Gateshead Council are determined to ensure that its employees provide the best levels of service and act properly.
- 1.2. This Code is designed to give employees the chance to draw attention to concerns about wrong or unacceptable practice. It is not about telling tales on colleagues but aims to ensure that work is carried out honestly and well.
- 1.3. All concerns will be recorded and investigated promptly.
- 1.4. Concerns will, so far as is possible, remain confidential and those raising them will be treated fairly by the Council/School.
- 1.5. Reports will be prepared, following investigation and appropriate action will be taken to resolve concerns.

2. Details of the Code

- 2.1. The sorts of issues covered by the Code include:
 - any unlawful act;
 - breaches of Council/School policy, codes of practice and acceptable standards of behaviour;
 - misuse of assets;
 - actions which could harm people/children;
 - significant damage to property;
 - abuses of position, power or authority;
 - unfair discrimination, and
 - other unethical conduct.
- 2.2. This Code is meant to add to existing procedures (e.g. for dealing with grievances). It should only be used where employees reporting concerns feel that other procedures cannot be used.
- 2.3. In many cases it is the Council's employees who are best placed to know of any concerns about wrong or unacceptable practice within a School and to

identify matters which fall short of what a School expects. The Council and the School therefore expects employees to report their concerns and will treat failure to do so as a serious matter. The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take action.

- 2.4. Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of a concern, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern. The Council and the School recognises the potential vulnerability of employees who express concerns under this procedure and will not tolerate any attempt to harass or victimise such a person.
- 2.5. Where a concern is found to be malicious or has been made in bad faith, this will be regarded as a serious matter and could lead to disciplinary action.
- 2.6. This Code encourages you to put your name to your concern whenever possible.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the School.

In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the credibility of the concern, and
- the likelihood of confirming the concern from attributable sources.

3. Procedure

- 3.1. Head Teachers will be the first point of contact. They will be responsible for initiating investigations to concerns promptly. If employees feel that their Head Teacher may be involved in the matter about which they are concerned, a member of the Governing Body should be the person informed of the concern.
- 3.2. It is desirable for those raising concerns to give the person charged with investigating them all relevant facts and the reasons for concern.

- 3.3. Although employees are not expected to prove the truth of any allegation, they will need to demonstrate sufficient and genuine grounds for concern.
- 3.4. The person receiving the concern will:
- record it;
 - ensure confidentiality, so far as may be possible in dealing properly with it;
 - make initial enquiries to decide what investigation will be appropriate. Concerns which come within the scope of existing procedures (e.g. child protection issues) will normally be considered under those procedures.
 - if required, investigate promptly and respond to the employee concerned. The person receiving the concern will also have a right of access to the Chair of the Governing Body. If the concern is received by a member of the Governing Body a senior officer from the LEA will be nominated to investigate the concern.
 - report to the Chair of the Governing Body where the investigation identifies a serious cause for concern. Where a concern involves theft, fraud or financial irregularities or bribery or corruption which involves the Council's/School's finances, the Strategic Director, Finance & I.C.T. should be notified before proceeding with any further investigation. The Strategic Director, Finance & I.C.T. shall take such steps as he may consider necessary by way of investigation;
 - recommend appropriate action to resolve the concern.
- 3.5. Within 10 working days of a concern being received the school will, in writing acknowledge receipt of the concern, indicate how it proposes to deal with it, give an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response, state whether any inquiries have been made, and state whether any further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.
- 3.6. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.
- 3.7. If a meeting is arranged between the person responsible for dealing with the concern under this procedure and the employee raising it, then the employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a friend who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

- 3.8. The school will confirm in writing to those raising concerns that they have been properly dealt with. Information about outcomes of investigations will be given unless this is not possible for legal reasons.

Whistleblowing Advice Line Support for professionals who are worried about children in the workplace

The Whistleblowing Advice Line offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation.

If you think an organisation is putting children at risk, even if you're not certain, call us today to talk through your concerns.

A chat with your partner or a mate about your concerns won't change anything but a chat with us can change a child's life.

Contact the Whistleblowing Advice Line

Call [0800 028 0285](tel:08000280285)

Email help@nspcc.org.uk

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is when someone raises a concern about a dangerous or illegal activity or any wrongdoing within their organisation.

Raising a concern is known as "blowing the whistle" and is a vital process for identifying risks to people's safety.

Sharing information or talking through a concern can be the first step to helping an organisation identify problems and improve their practices.

When to call

If you have any concerns about a child in your workplace you should raise this with your employer or organisational safeguarding lead in the first instance.

You should call the Whistleblowing Advice Line if:

- your organisation doesn't have clear safeguarding procedures to follow
- you think your concern won't be dealt with properly or may be covered-up
- you've raised a concern but it hasn't been acted upon
- you're worried about being treated unfairly.

You can call about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now or you believe may happen in the future.

What to expect when you call

One of our call handlers will connect you with a trained practitioner.

They will discuss your concerns with you and:

- talk you through the whistleblowing process
- take details of your concern
- explain the protection available to you if you need it
- get relevant agencies and authorities to take action on your concern.

You don't have to tell us who you are if you don't want to - you can remain anonymous. If you do give us your name and contact details you can ask us not to share these with other agencies.

If you think a child is in immediate danger

Don't delay - call the police on 999,
or call us on [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000), straight away.

What the law says about whistleblowing

If you disclose information about wrongdoing the law protects you from being treated unfairly or losing your job.

A disclosure qualifies for protection if you are a worker and you disclose something about an organisation.

A disclosure must be about something that affects the general public such as:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- an legal obligation has been breached
- there has been a miscarriage of justice
- the health or safety of any individual has been endangered

- the environment has been damaged
- information about any of the above has been concealed.

This is set out in the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#). The Act applies to England, Scotland and Wales. For more information about child protection across the UK see our pages on reporting concerns in [England](#), [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#)

The NSPCC has been a prescribed whistleblowing body for child welfare and protection since 2014 ([Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2016](#)). This means any worker who has child protection or welfare concerns can make a disclosure to us and we can seek to protect them against unfair treatment at work.

You can find out more about whistleblowing on the [GOV.uk website](#).

About the Whistleblowing Advice Line

In addition to our [general helpline](#) for anyone who is worried about a child and would like support and advice, we run several [dedicated helplines](#).

The Whistleblowing Advice Line was commissioned by the [Home Office](#). It is a direct response to the recommendation for "a new whistleblowing national portal for child abuse related reports" set out in the Government's Tackling child sexual exploitation report ([HM Government, 2015](#)).

The Whistleblowing Advice Line isn't intended to replace any current practices or responsibilities of organisations working with children. We encourage professionals to raise any concerns.