



**Kepier**  
Believe in you

# Policy Statement

## Whistleblowing

- **Produced By: Mrs J Taylor**  
**Adopted from Sunderland City Council**
- **Ratified By: F&GPC 3 July 2013**
- **Review Date: As Required**

**Dr PDB Collins**  
**Chair of Governing Body**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kepier is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty, integrity and accountability. As part of this commitment the school is keen that activity which falls below these standards is reported to the Governing Body in order that it can be dealt with promptly. The school recognises that members of school community or members of the public will often be the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong with the activities of the school or that the school is suffering a loss in some form. It encourages all members of the community with concerns about any aspect of the school's work to come forward and voice those concerns. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are about unlawful conduct, financial malpractice or dangers to the public or the environment, it can be difficult to know what to do. Specific examples might include:
- a criminal offence (e.g. fraud, corruption etc.) may have or has been committed;
  - a miscarriage of justice has been or is likely to occur;
  - the health or safety of an individual has been or is likely to be endangered;
  - public funds are being used in an unauthorised manner;
  - the environment has been or is likely to be damaged;
  - the school's own rules have been or are being breached;
  - abuse (e.g. physical, sexual) is taking place;
  - discrimination e.g. disability, race etc. is occurring;
- 1.2 As a member of the school community, you may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to yourself, perhaps feeling it's none of your business or that it's only a suspicion. You may also fear you may not be taken seriously, even ridiculed, or be victimised in some way. You may decide to say something but find that you are not sure how to raise the issue or are not sure what to do next.
- 1.3 The school has introduced this Whistle Blowing Policy specifically to enable you to raise your concerns about suspected malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. We would rather that you raised the matter when it is just a concern rather than wait for proof. The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable you, as a member of the school community, to communicate serious concerns to the Governing Body.
- 1.4 If something is of concern which you think we should know about, or look into, please use this policy. Do not ignore the concern

## 2. Aims

- 2.1 This policy aims to:
- encourage members of the school community to feel confident in raising serious concerns;
  - reassure members of the school community that, if they raise any concerns in good faith and reasonably believe them to be true, i.e. "whistleblow", they will be protected from victimisation and their concerns will be taken seriously;
  - provide avenues for a members of the school community to raise concerns and receive appropriate feedback on any action taken;

- ensure that members of the school community get an appropriate response from the school to the concerns they have raised and, if not satisfied, how they may take the matter further.

### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This document may be used by any member of the school community. This includes staff, learners, parents and carers, suppliers, contractors, partners, consultants, service providers, Local Authorities or other organisations, Councillors and any members of the public.
- 3.2 It is not intended that this policy and its associated procedures should be used to raise concerns which fall within the scope of other more appropriate school procedures, for example Dealing With Complaints, Safeguarding, Staff Discipline and Conduct.

### **4. Safeguards**

#### *Harassment or Victimisation*

- 4.1 The school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. The school will not tolerate victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

#### *Confidentiality*

- 4.2 The school will do its best to protect your identity when you raise a concern and do not want your name to be disclosed. If you ask us to protect your identity by keeping your confidence, we will not disclose it without your consent or unless instructed by a Tribunal or Court. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identity (e.g. a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence) we will discuss with you whether and how we can proceed.

#### *Anonymous Allegations*

- 4.3 We strongly encourage you to put your name to your allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously will be much more difficult for us to look into, protect your position or to give you feedback. Concerns raised anonymously are much less powerful and less likely to be effective, but they will be considered at the discretion of the school.
- 4.4 In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account include:
- the seriousness of the issues raised;
  - the credibility and plausibility of the concern; and
  - the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

### **5. How to Raise a Concern directly with the School**

- 5.1 As a first step, you should normally raise your concerns with the Principal. Alternatively if your concern involves the Principal you should contact the Chair of the Governing Body via the school office who will give you contact details.

Please say if you want to raise the matter in confidence so the person you contact can make appropriate arrangements.

- 5.2 Concerns are better raised in writing. You are invited to set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. If you do not feel able to put your concern in writing, you can telephone or arrange to meet the appropriate person.
- 5.3 The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is for the school to take action.
- 5.4 Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

## **6. How the School will respond**

- 6.1 The action taken by the school will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may be:
- investigated internally;
  - referred to the Police;
  - referred to the Local Authority Social Services
  - referred to the School's appointed auditors
  - referred to the Education Funding Agency
- 6.2 In order to protect individuals and the school, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
- 6.3 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation.
- 6.4 Within ten working days of a concern being received, the school will write to you:
- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
  - indicating, in general terms, how it proposes to deal with the matter.
- 6.5 The amount of contact between the school and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from you.
- 6.6 The school will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern.
- 6.7 The school accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed and as far as possible the school will provide you with information in this regard.

## **7. How the matter can be taken further**

- 7.1 This policy is intended to provide you with an avenue to raise concerns directly with the school and to give you the reassurance you need to raise such matters.

7.2 The school hopes you will be satisfied with the response you receive. If you are not, or if you feel, for any reason, that you cannot raise the matter directly with the school then the following are possible contact points:

- the Police;
- the Education Funding Agency;
- the Information Commissioner (01625 545 700);
- Audit Commission Public Interest Disclosure line (0845 052 2646);

The list above is not exhaustive and other possible parties to contact may be:

- your local Councillor (if you live in the area of the Council);
- relevant regulatory organisations;
- your solicitor.

We would rather you raise a matter of concern with the appropriate regulator or outside body than not at all.

## **8. The Responsible Officer**

8.1 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the Whistleblowing Policy. The Clerk to the Governing Body will maintain a register of the number and nature of the concerns raised and the outcomes (but in a form which does not endanger your confidentiality) and will report as necessary to the Governing Body, where appropriate.

8.2 This Policy will be reviewed as necessary to ensure it remains up to date and effective. This review will be carried out by the Governing Body.