

GODWIN JUNIOR SCHOOL



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

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

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.

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.

We recognise that allegations, when they occur, are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that some allegations are genuine and that there are adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our organisation are safe to work with children. We will always ensure that the procedures outlined by Working Together to Safeguard Children are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (formerly known as LADO in previous versions of Working Together to Safeguard Children which this procedure will continue to use for ease of reference).

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 or disadvantage.

SCOPE

The Act provides protection for workers who disclose information 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.

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.

The governors and staff fully recognise the contribution the school makes in partnership with other local agencies to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm. The aim of this policy is to enable employees to raise their concerns in-house in relation to safeguarding our children.

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, you feel unable to raise the matter with your line manager, you may raise the concern with the Headteacher, or another senior member of school staff. If you feel unable to raise your concern with any member of the school leadership, you may raise it with the Chair of Governors, Kam Hudson, via email: kam.hudson@godwin.newham.sch.uk.

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

If you have a concern about a governor, you should speak to the Chair of Governors. If you feel unable to raise your concern with them, you may raise it with your Head Teacher or a senior officer of the LA. You are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation. However, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

The school hopes that this policy gives you the reassurance you would need to raise concerns internally. However, it recognises that there may be circumstances where progressing through the internal route has failed and you can only report your 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 senior officer of the LA.

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 you have raised your concern, the person receiving the whistleblowing allegation will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated properly. You will usually be informed within one school day that your concern has been received and is being investigated. The nature of the investigation will depend upon the concern raised.

The person receiving the whistleblowing concern is responsible for ensuring you receive 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 you of the precise action undertaken where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed by the school to another party.**

If an allegation is made or information is received about any member of staff (or volunteer) who works in our setting (or another setting) who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child

- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children*

The member of staff receiving the information should inform the Head Teacher immediately; this includes concerns relating to agency and supply staff and volunteers.

Should an allegation be made against the Head Teacher, this will be reported to the Chair of Governors in such cases where it is not possible, a consultation will be sought by that staff member with the LADO. The Head Teacher will seek advice from the LADO (this will be within one working day). No member of staff will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns within the Organisation should contact the LADO directly on: 020 3373 3803

Further national guidance can be found at: Advice on whistleblowing or see the NSPCC website for further advice.

**In addition, staff should also alert the Headteacher/Manager/Owner/MD if an individual who is working in London has behaved in a way in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns. These concerns do not need to directly relate to a child (see Chapter 7 of the London Child Protection Procedures for further guidance).*

The school has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person from regulated activity. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or HR.

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 you from any recrimination or victimisation as a result of raising a genuine concern.

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity, if you so wish. However, in some circumstances you may be needed to come forward as a witness.

You are encouraged to put your name to your 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 you are unsure whether to use the school's Whistleblowing Policy, or you want independent advice at any stage, you may contact the independent charity called Public Concern at Work, an organisation that seeks to ensure that concerns about serious malpractice are properly raised and addressed in the

workplace. The staff will give you free expert and confidential advice about how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work using a Whistleblowing Policy. Their contact details are: www.pcaw.org.uk or tel: 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 under 5.1 and 5.2 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.