



Whistleblowing Policy

Pilgrim PRU

1. Introduction

The Pilgrim PRU is committed to the highest possible standard of operation, probity and accountability, and recognises that its workers are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the school or the hospital. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the school, and they may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with that Act and its commitment to the highest standards of service delivery, the Pilgrim PRU encourages its workers with serious concerns about any aspect of the school's work to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, **within** the school according to the procedure in Section 5, rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside.

2. Objective

The aim of this policy and associated procedures is to establish an internal mechanism that will encourage and enable workers to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the school, (which do not meet the criteria for being dealt with as a complaint or grievance), in confidence and without fear of reprisals, to ensure that the school continues to improve its services and provides best value.

3. Scope

Concerns that should be raised via the Whistleblowing Policy may be in relation to the actions/behaviours of other school employees, private contractors, volunteers and/or members of the management committee and be about something that is perceived as:

- unlawful; or
- against the school's policies; or
- falling below established standard or practice; or
- amounting to improper conduct.

Concerns about financial irregularities should be raised in accordance with the Financial Regulations in School document. (LINK)



Concerns that fall outside the scope of the Whistleblowing Policy are those raised by workers:

- about their own conditions of service: these should be addressed via the PRU's Grievance Procedure or Bullying and Harassment at Work Procedure, depending on the nature/seriousness of the complaint.

4. Principles

This policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

- **All** workers have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- The responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour rests with **all** workers, and under the School's Health & Safety Policy workers are expected to raise concerns about potential health and safety risks.
- The School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect employees when they raise a concern in good faith.
- The school will do its best to protect an employee's identity when he/she raises a concern and does not want his/her name to be disclosed. However, if the concern raised needs to be addressed through another procedure, e.g. disciplinary procedure, the employee may be required to provide a signed statement as part of the evidence.
- In some circumstances the School may have to disclose the identity of the employee without his/her consent, although this will be discussed with the employee first.
- Appropriate advice and support will be made available to workers who raise concerns.
- Employees who raise concerns will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.
- The School will not tolerate malicious or vexatious allegations, which may be considered a disciplinary offence.

5. Procedures

Procedures for reporting and investigating 'whistleblowing' concerns have been developed to ensure that:

- avenues exist (first approach should be made to your line-manager if appropriate or to the Head teacher, if appropriate or to the Chair of the Management Committee) for employees to raise concerns internally as a matter of course, and receive feedback on any action taken;
- concerns are taken seriously and dealt with quickly and appropriately;
- employees are reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith;
- employees can take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the school's response e.g. the Local Authority or Ofsted;



- issues raised are addressed via other procedures as appropriate, e.g. anti-fraud and corruption, grievance, disciplinary, health & safety, harassment, child protection and adult abuse procedures; and
- appropriate records are maintained for monitoring purposes.

6. Anonymous Allegations

Anonymous allegations will be investigated at the discretion of the school after an assessment has been made of the nature and seriousness of the concerns, and the ability of the school to substantiate the allegations from other attributable sources.

7. Review and Monitoring

The Head Teacher and the Full Management Committee are responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy in accordance with agreed performance indicators:

- the number of concerns raised via the Whistleblowing policy;
- the nature and type of concerns raised;
- the number of concerns raised dealt with via the grievance and complaints procedures;
- the number of concerns resolved at the initial discussion stage of the procedure;
- the number of concerns investigated via other procedures, e.g. child protection, disciplinary and health and safety procedures; and
- the number of concerns raised externally.

The Head teacher will collate the monitoring information and submit an annual monitoring report to the Full Governing Body.

The policy/procedures will be reviewed and their effectiveness evaluated annually in the light of learning points/issues raised or identified as part of the monitoring process. Revisions to the policy/procedure will be made following endorsement from Full Management Committee.