



Emmanuel Christian School Whistle Blowing Policy

Introduction

This policy applies to all employees, governors, agency workers, contractors, students on placement and volunteers working in the school.

This policy particularly applies to concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice or failures to properly safeguard children. The safety and welfare of pupils is paramount, and whistleblowing in relation to safeguarding concerns will always be taken seriously and acted upon without delay.

It is important to the business that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by workers or officers of the organisation is reported and properly dealt with. The organisation therefore encourages all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the business or the way in which the business is run. This policy sets out the way in which individuals may raise any concerns that they have and how those concerns will be dealt with.

This policy meets the requirements of Section 3 (Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements) of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework (effective September 2025).

Background

The law provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. These are called "qualifying disclosures".

A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by a worker who has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an act creating risk to health and safety;
- an act causing damage to the environment;
- a breach of any other legal obligation; or
- concealment of any of the above;

is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. It is not necessary for the worker to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. The worker has no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

A worker who makes such a protected disclosure has the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because he/she has made a disclosure.

The organisation encourages workers to raise their concerns under this procedure in the first instance. If a worker is not sure whether or not to raise a concern, he/she should discuss the issue with his/her head of section or the Head Teacher.

Principles

- Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Workers should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.
- Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the worker who raised the issue.
- No worker will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the worker will not be prejudiced because he/she has raised a legitimate concern.
- Victimisation of a worker for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.
- If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure the organisation's disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.
- Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a head of section, workers should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to the Head Teacher.

This procedure is for disclosures about matters other than a breach of an employee's own contract of employment. If an employee is concerned that his/her own contract has been, or is likely to be, broken, he/she should use the organisation's grievance procedure.

Procedure

- (1) In the first instance, and unless the worker reasonably believes his/her head of section to be involved in the wrongdoing, or if for any other reason the worker does not wish to approach his/her head of section, any concerns should be raised with the worker's head of section. If he/she believes the head of section to be involved, or for any reason does not wish to approach the head of section, then the worker should proceed straight to stage 3.
- (2) When a concern is raised, it will be acknowledged promptly and investigated by the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), unless the concern relates to them, in which case it will be referred to the Chair of Governors. The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome of the concern, as far as is appropriate while maintaining confidentiality.
- (3) The head of section will arrange an investigation into the matter (either by investigating the matter him/herself or immediately passing the issue to someone in a more senior position). The investigation may involve the worker and other individuals involved giving a written statement. Any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out above. The worker's statement will be taken into account, and he/she will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained. The head of section (or the person who carried out the investigation) will then report to the board, which will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to any appropriate government department or regulatory agency. If

disciplinary action is required, the head of section (or the person who carried out the investigation) will report the matter to the Head Teacher and start the disciplinary procedure. On conclusion of any investigation, the worker will be told the outcome of the investigation and what the board has done, or proposes to do, about it. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

- (4) If the worker is concerned that his/her head of section is involved in the wrongdoing, has failed to make a proper investigation or has failed to report the outcome of the investigations to the Senior Leadership Team he/she should inform the Head Teacher who will arrange for another head of section to review the investigation carried out, make any necessary enquiries and make his/her own report to the Senior Leadership Team as in stage 2 above. If for any other reason the worker does not wish to approach his/her head of section he/she should also in the first instance contact Director of Operations. Any approach to the director will be treated with the strictest confidence and the worker's identity will not be disclosed without his/her prior consent.
- (5) If on conclusion of stages 1, 2 and 3 the worker reasonably believes that the appropriate action has not been taken, he/she should report the matter to the proper authority. The legislation sets out a number of bodies to which qualifying disclosures may be made. These include:
 - HM Revenue & Customs;
 - the Financial Conduct Authority (formerly the Financial Services Authority);
 - the Competition and Markets Authority;
 - the Health and Safety Executive;
 - the Environment Agency;
 - the Independent Police Complaints Commission; and
 - the Serious Fraud Office.

Where a member of staff, student, or volunteer feels unable to raise a concern internally, or believes their concern has not been properly addressed, they may contact the following external organisations:

- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:** 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk
- **Ofsted complaints procedure:** via www.gov.uk/complain-about-school
- **GOV.UK Whistleblowing guidance:** www.gov.uk/whistleblowing

5) If your complaint is against the Headteacher or Chairman of Governors then you should contact the LADO, Jude Atkinson:
Local Authority Designated Officer

NEW Allegations Line 0116 454 2440

NEW Email: Lado-allegations-referrals@leicester.gov.uk

All staff, students, and volunteers will be made aware of this policy as part of their induction and safeguarding training, and reminded regularly that they are able to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.

