

# Priestley Primary School

## Staff Whistle Blowing Policy

Reviewed Spring 2023



## Philosophy

Priestley Primary School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. Our Whistle Blowing Policy supports this commitment. It gives employees and others with genuine concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing in the school, a way to voice those concerns without fear of victimisation.

## Principles

Often it is those closest to an organisation who realise that there is something wrong. Sometimes people are reluctant to act upon their concerns because they think that they are being disloyal, or because they are afraid that they might be victimised if they speak up.

The purpose of this Policy is to provide you with the help and support you need to speak up and be confident that you can do so safely. We will take your concerns seriously and ensure that they are dealt with promptly and fairly.

## Procedures

How to raise a concern

- Speak to any member of SMT or write to the Chair of Governors
- You will receive a response within 5 working days during term-time
- You will be asked to meet to discuss your concerns. Before the meeting, it would be helpful if you write down what you consider the problem to be, giving names, dates and places where possible. If there are any other documents that you think might be helpful, please try to bring these with you
- We will write to you within 10 days of your initial meeting to:
  - acknowledge that your concern has been received;
  - outline our understanding of what the issues are and;
  - indicate how we propose to deal with the matter, if appropriate.

If SMT or Chair of Governors decides that it is appropriate for an investigation to be carried out, advice from the Local Authority will be sought and followed. Where it is necessary to safeguard children or vulnerable adults, the appropriate procedures will be followed. In addition, where it is established that the complaint involves issues of bullying or unlawful discrimination, it will be necessary to seek appropriate professional advice. Investigations will never be conducted by anyone in your line management structure. If an investigation is carried out, you will always be informed of the final outcome. It might not be possible to give you full details of the outcome if it contains personal details of a third party, because we have a duty to protect personal information under the Data Protection Act.

### Anonymous allegations

You are encouraged to raise your concern in person, because concerns which are expressed anonymously are difficult to investigate. However, anonymous allegations may be investigated depending on

- the seriousness of the issues raised;
- the credibility of the allegation and;
- the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation from attributable sources.

### How will the school treat whistle blowers?

- If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If you knowingly make malicious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against you.
- Disciplinary action will be taken against any member of staff who tries to stop another employee from raising a concern or who is responsible for any act of recrimination or victimisation against an employee who raises a concern.
- Where an employee may have been party themselves to an act of possible gross misconduct on which they are now 'blowing the whistle' this could be considered in mitigation. They are not, however, exempt from disciplinary action.
- Disciplinary action may be taken against employees if they contact the media with concerns about conduct at work without first following the steps set out in this policy.

- The SMT/Chair of Govenors will make every effort to protect an employee's identity when s/he raises a concern and does not want her/his name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated however, that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by the employee may be required as part of the evidence.
- If you raise a concern, you will be given the opportunity to feed back any issues or problems you may have experienced as a result. This will take place outside your line management structure. The purpose of this is to ensure that employees who have raised concerns in good faith do not suffer as a result.
- If you have any queries about this policy please contact the Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors.

**To Be Reviewed Spring 2024**