



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

This policy refers to the whole school including the EYFS.

This policy and procedure have been adopted by the School to enable members of staff to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about fraud, malpractice, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriage of justice, and failure to comply with legal obligations, inappropriate behaviour or unethical conduct.

St Piran's School's policy on whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that the School:

- Has a culture of safety for raising concerns, valuing staff and of reflective practice.
- Will not tolerate malpractice.
- Respects the confidentiality of employees raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively.
- Will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate.
- Will invoke the School's disciplinary policy and procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations.
- Will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all employees.

Procedure

This procedure is separate from the School's adopted procedures regarding grievances.

Employees should not use the whistle-blowing procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation. If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this procedure you should seek advice from the Headmaster. If the concern involves the Headmaster, then the member of staff should refer to the Chair of Governors.

This procedure is to enable employees to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the School.

Malpractice is not easily defined; however, it includes allegations of fraud, financial irregularities, corruption, bribery, dishonesty, acting contrary to the staff code of conduct, criminal activities, or failing to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice, or creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment.

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to suspected malpractice within the School. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected malpractice affecting any of the School's activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this procedure.

If staff and volunteers feel unable to raise an issue with the School or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may report their concerns to other whistleblowing channels, such as:

- Protect, an independent whistleblowing charity, previously known as Public Concern at Work (helpline: 020 3117 2520, email: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk, website: [Contact us - Protect - Speak up stop harm \(protect-advice.org.uk\)](https://www.protect-advice.org.uk))
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (tel: 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk).

Confidentiality

Staff should feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this procedure. However, if you wish to raise a concern confidentially, every effort will be made to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating the concern to know your identity, this will be discussed with you.

If there is evidence of criminal activity, then the Police will in all cases be informed.

The School does not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistle-blowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should discuss this with the Head and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are set out above.

Raising a whistleblowing concern

Employees will be at liberty to raise a whistleblowing concern to the Head, Deputies or Head of HR. If the concern is about the Headmaster, then it should be raised with the Chair of Governors, Mrs Kate Taylor.

A meeting will be arranged with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this procedure. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation. You may be required to attend additional meetings to provide further information as the concerns raised are investigated.

Any concerns raised will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and appropriate corrective action will be pursued. The employee making the allegation will be kept informed of progress wherever possible and, subject to third party rights, will be informed of the outcome. Final outcomes should be reported within 15 working days of the concern being raised.

An employee who is not satisfied that his/her concern is being properly dealt with will have a right to raise it in confidence with the Headmaster. If this action would be inappropriate, then it should be raised with the Chair of Governors, Mrs Kate Taylor, via the Clerk to Governors.

External Procedures

Where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff shall have a right of access to an external person/body. This may include (depending on the subject matter of the disclosure) HMRC, the Audit Commission, the Charity Commission, the Health and Safety Executive and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (where the disclosure relates to a child protection issue).

It should be noted that under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where a member of staff may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the individual reasonably believes:-

- that exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- that the School would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- where they believe they would be victimised by the School; or

- where the Secretary of State has ordered it.

Safeguarding

If a member of staff has a serious concern about poor or unsafe practices and potential failures in the school's safeguarding systems they should in the first instance contact the Headmaster. They are then able to contact the Safeguarding Governing Governor, Mrs Kate Taylor, whose contact details are in the Safeguarding Policy or available from the Bursary. Additionally, they can also contact the Local Safeguarding Partnership directly by telephone: 01628 683150.

Malicious Accusations

False, malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be treated as gross misconduct and dealt with under the School's Disciplinary and Competency Procedures.

Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation

No employee will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine and legitimate concern, providing that they do so in good faith and follow the Whistle-blower procedures.

Further information

If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Public Concern at Work, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are:

Protect (formerly known as *Public Concern at Work*)

Helpline: 020 3117 2520 Website: [Contact us - Protect - Speak up stop harm \(protect-advice.org.uk\)](https://www.protect-advice.org.uk)

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