



FARNEY CLOSE SCHOOL

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Signed	
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Introduction

From time to time, we all have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually, these concerns are easily resolved. However, sometimes it can be difficult to know what to do, particularly if this is having a negative impact on you or if you become aware of unsafe, illegal, unethical, or negligent conduct.

Farney Close School is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and ethics. This Whistleblowing policy has been developed so that you will know how to raise a concern in the right way at an early stage and so that when you follow these guidelines, your concern is dealt with properly, appropriately, you feel supported and, if necessary, protected.

This procedure is not a substitute for normal line management processes but an addition to them. It is not a substitute or alternative for existing procedures such as Grievance, Disciplinary or the Complaints procedure.

This policy should only be used for concerns where the interests of others or of the organisation itself are at risk. If this is the case, or if you have a personal interest in the matter, you will need to tell us about this when you speak up. **Nevertheless, if you are in doubt, it is better to speak so that the issue can be addressed.**

Aims of Policy

To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected;

- To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns,
- To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and is not intended to have contractual effect. It is to provide guidance for all individuals working in the school, including Governors and Consultants, and the school reserves the right to amend its content at any time.

a. What is Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. A concern may fall within one of the following categories, but if it does not, or you are not sure, and you have a genuine concern, you should seek advice from the Principal or the Designated Governor before you report it under this policy.

- Criminal Activity
- Danger to Health and Safety
- Failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirement
- Damage to the environment
- Financial Fraud or mismanagement
- Breach of a code of practice or internal policy
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information

- Conduct likely to damage the School's reputation
- An attempt to cover up any of the above.

b. Raising a Concern

You can raise concerns under this policy orally or in writing. If you would like to raise your concern in confidence, please say so in order that a confidential meeting can be arranged.

Step 1

If you are concerned about something at work, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your line manager.

Step 2

If you feel unable to raise the matter with your manager, for whatever reason, please take it to the Principal.

Step 3

If either of the above staff are the subject of your concern, please refer it to the Chair of Governors.

Once you have reported your concern, the person that you reported it to will take advice in order to assess what action to take. They will then write to you, summarising your concern, which you must verify and sign, and to tell you how we propose to deal with the situation and by when. Obviously, any action taken will be dependent upon the nature and seriousness of the concern. The matter may be passed to the most relevant person or body to investigate and report back.

We will try to handle any matter you raise with us fairly and properly. We will give you as much feedback as we properly can. However, please note that we may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this would infringe upon a duty of confidence between us and another party.

If you wish you may ask for a meeting in order to raise a concern or, if you are a member of a union, you can seek their advice and support at any stage. You can also bring a colleague with you.

We will not tolerate the victimisation or harassment of anyone raising a concern. Equally the school will not tolerate anyone who maliciously raises a concern they know to be untrue.

In certain circumstances, employees are also protected when they raise a genuine concern by the Public Interest Disclosure Act. This legislation aims to reassure employees that it is safe to speak up. In order for these protections to apply, the guidelines contained in this policy need to be followed and the concern must fall within certain categories. If you would like more information on the Public Interest Disclosure Act, please ask.

c. Confidentiality

Whilst we hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy, we recognise that there may be circumstances where a member of staff may wish to raise a concern confidentially. The school will endeavour to protect your identity and will not disclose it without first discussing it with you. However, there may be issues where it is not possible to protect your identity (e.g. if your evidence is needed as part of a child protection

investigation, or in court). If this is the case, then we will inform you how we are going to proceed.

The school does not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if the school cannot obtain further information. It is also more difficult to establish whether the allegations are credible and have been made in good faith. Whistle-blowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed, should make contact with the Principal and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality.

d. External Reporting

This policy should reassure you that it is safe and accepted to raise genuine concerns internally. However, we recognise that there are circumstances where you can properly report matters to outside bodies, such as regulatory bodies or the police. If you suspect this may be the case you should seek independent advice from:

- The independent charity: Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) Tel: 020 3117 2520 or whistle@pcaw.org.uk
- Your trade union if you are a member.

You should take care not to divulge information to outside bodies where you have a duty of confidentiality to the School or its staff.

e. Protection and Support

Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern in good faith. This includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If a member of staff believes they have suffered any such treatment they should inform the Principal immediately. If the matter is not remedied the member of staff should raise it formally using the school's Grievance Policy.

- Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistle-blowers in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.
- All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing.

f. Contacts

Governor with Responsibility for Whistleblowing	Martin Gibrill
Protect (Independent Whistleblowing Charity)	Helpline: 0203 117 2520 Whistle@protect-advice.org.uk www.pcaw.co.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline Available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled	Helpline 0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org