



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

This Policy was approved by Governors on:	February 2024
This Policy was shared with staff in:	February 2024
Implementation of this Policy will be monitored by:	Head of Pastoral Care, SLT and Head Teacher
Monitoring will take place at regular intervals	
The Policy will be reviewed annually or more regularly if needed.	
Policy Review Date:	November 2023
Date of next Review:	November 2024

The aims of this policy are:

- 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 reflects the School's current practices and applies to all individuals working at all levels of the organisation including the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, Lead Teachers, employees, governors, consultants, contractors, trainees, part-time and fixed term workers, casual and agency staff (collectively referred to as "Staff" in this policy).

The Public Interest Disclosure Act provides staff with the protection from dismissal or other damage as a result of making a disclosure of information in the public interest about wrongdoing at work.

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- Conduct which is an offence or breach of law
- Child protection and/or safeguarding concerns
- Danger to health and safety
- Damage to the environment
- Financial fraud or mis-management
- Negligence
- Breach of the school's internal policies and procedures including the Code of Conduct
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to staff's own personal circumstances, such as the way they have been treated at work. In those cases they should use the Grievance Policy.

If a member of staff is unsure about raising a concern they can get independent advice from Protect - formally Public Concern at Work which is an independent charity on 0203 117 2520 or by email at whistle@protect-advice.org.uk. Their lawyers will provide the member of staff with options and help to raise a concern about wrongdoing at work.

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases staff should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. However if the concern is with your line manager/Headteacher you can contact the Chair of Governors.

How to raise a concern:

- Staff should voice any concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as they feel they can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Staff should approach their immediate line manager, Head Teacher, or the Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer.
- Concerns should be put in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where possible.
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.
- If it is felt the matter is so serious that it cannot be discussed with anyone within the school, please contact the **Chair of Governors, c/o Poverest Primary School, Tillingbourne Green, Orpington, Kent BR5 2JD (cog@poverest.co.uk).**

What happens next?

- Once a member of staff has raised a concern, the school will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. The member of staff will be informed of the outcome of this assessment and may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

- A meeting will be arranged with the member of staff who may wish to bring a colleague or trade union representative to any meetings, who must respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and any subsequent investigation. The school will take down a written summary of the concern raised and provide a copy to the member of staff as soon as practicable after the meeting. The school will also aim to give the member of staff an indication of how they propose to deal with the matter.
- The member of staff will be informed of the progress of any investigation, which will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Self reporting:

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, or perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most situations, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice and support:

It is recognised that whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful.

Further support can be gained from outside bodies such as regulators, the police, or your professional trade union.