



Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures

This Policy is for all staff employed by Warren Road Primary School. Warren Road Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

- This procedure should be followed where you wish to draw attention to issues of bad practice, possible fraud or corruption or other matters which seem to you to be against the interests of the public, the Academy or its staff.
- Warren Road Primary School and its employees have a duty to ensure that service users are respected and treated in a proper manner and that the standards of the services it provides are maintained at the highest possible level. Warren Road Primary School also has a duty to ensure that resources (finance and staff) paid for with public money are used effectively and efficiently and without waste. Members of staff have a right to be treated with respect by their colleagues, service users and Warren Road Primary School as their employer.
- Warren Road Primary School is committed to protecting employees who use the procedure and "blow the whistle" in good faith from victimisation. Employees should therefore never treat another employee of Warren Road Primary School less favourably because they have reported or may be considering reporting an issue of concern under this procedure.
- This procedure needs to be considered in conjunction with legislation which deals specifically with how to combat fraud and corruption.

Policy and Procedure

1. Aim

- 1.1 To provide clear guidelines on the position of Warren Road Primary School in relation to Whistleblowing.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 To provide avenues for you to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- 2.2 Allows you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with Warren Road Primary School's response.
- 2.3 Reassure you that you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.

3. Context

- 3.1 The Trustees of Warren Road Primary School are committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we encourage employees who have serious concerns about any aspect of Warren Road Primary School to come forward and voice those concerns.

4. Legal Position

- 4.1 This policy provides a means for you to raise a concern under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which provides you with a certain level of legal protection if you wish to raise legitimate concerns.

5. Definitions, Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

Appendix A provides detailed guidance on Warren Road Primary School's Whistleblowing Policy including:

- Introduction
- Aims and Scopes of the Policy
- Safeguards
- How to Raise a Concern
- How Warren Road Primary School will Respond
- How the matter can be taken further

Appendix B provides a procedural flowchart.

6. Evaluation

This policy will be evaluated by the Trustees of Warren Road Primary School to ensure it is still fit for purpose. Circumstances may require more frequent modifications.

Appendix A: Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction

As an employee or a Trustee you are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within Warren Road Primary School. However, you may not express your concerns because you feel that speaking up would be disloyal to colleagues or Warren Road Primary School. You may also fear harassment or victimisation, and think it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report it.

Warren Road Primary School is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we encourage employees and Trustees, who have serious concerns about any aspect of Warren Road Primary School's work, to come forward and voice those concerns.

It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This policy document makes it clear that staff can do so without fear of reprisals. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable staff and Trustees, to raise serious concerns with Warren Road Primary School rather than overlooking a problem or discussing it externally.

In addition, the policy provides a means for you to raise a concern under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which provides you with a certain level of legal protection if you wish to raise legitimate concerns.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for:

- maintaining and operating the policy
- annual report on the effectiveness of the policy
- approving amendments to the policy
- promoting the policy periodically
- maintaining a record of concerns raised and the outcomes (but in a form that does not endanger your confidentiality) and will report as necessary to the Trustees of Warren Road Primary School.

2. Aim and Scope of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- provide avenues for you to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with Warren Road Primary School's response and
- reassure you that you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.

This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures, although Warren Road Primary School reserves the right to determine which procedure is appropriate.

Concerns to be reported under this policy may relate to something that:

- is unlawful
- is against Warren Road Primary School's Procedure Rules, Financial Procedure Rules or other policies;
- falls below established standards or practice; or
- amounts to improper conduct

3. Safeguards

3.1 Harassment or Victimation

Warren Road Primary School recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. Warren Road Primary School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. This does not mean that if you are already the subject of procedures such as disciplinary, capability, grievance or managing attendance, that those procedures will be halted as a result of your whistleblowing. Where feasible, you will be contacted when your concern has been investigated to ascertain whether you have suffered any detriment as a result of your whistleblowing. If at any time, either during or after the investigation, you feel that you have suffered any detriment as a result of your whistleblowing you should contact the Chair of Governors.

3.2 Confidentiality

Warren Road Primary School treats the details of all whistleblowers in confidence and will do its best not to divulge your identity. However, it must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information without us revealing your identity directly, and a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence.

3.3

Anonymous Allegations

Allegations can be made anonymously. However, this policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation, as concerns expressed anonymously are often much more difficult to investigate. For example, we may need to contact you to obtain further information or verify the details you have already given us. Anonymous allegations will be considered wherever possible at the discretion of Warren Road Primary School.

The factors to be taken into account when determining whether an investigation in such a case can proceed would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the creditability of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other, attributable sources

3.4 Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make malicious or vexatious allegations, appropriate action may be taken against you.

4. When to use this procedure

If you have serious concerns about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of anyone acting on behalf of Warren Road Primary School, you may not be sure whether there is a case for investigation. In these circumstances it may be helpful to remember that you have a duty both to members of the public and your colleagues. As a guide it might be helpful to ask the questions:

- Is this situation unacceptable to me?
- Is this wasteful?
- Could this be done better?

If the answer is "yes" then you should follow the procedure set out below even if this could place you in an embarrassing situation with a particular colleague or group of colleagues.

5. How to Raise a Concern

The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is to take action. As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate line manager or other appropriate manager. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved, you should contact the Chair of Governors in writing. You may invite your trade union or professional association to raise a matter on your behalf.

You can raise concerns orally or in writing. Whichever you decide to do, you should make a note so that you have a record for future reference. This note should include what occurred, where and when, and also to whom you submitted the complaint to and when. If you decide to raise a matter orally you may be requested to make a written statement at a later stage depending on the circumstances. The seriousness of the issue will influence who you decide to raise it with. It may be:

- Your immediate line manager
- The Head Teacher
- A Member of the Governing Body

If the issue is of a very serious nature, for example concerning maltreatment of service users, maladministration or an illegal act, you may decide that it is appropriate to contact the Chair of Governors

with statutory responsibility for taking action on illegality or maladministration. If the issue involves possible fraud or corruption you may decide to contact the Department of Education.

If you feel the issue is sufficiently serious for you to put it in writing, you can write directly to one of the people referred to above marking the envelope "Personal". This will be opened by the officer concerned and you will be guaranteed a response within seven days. This can be sent to your home address if you indicate that is what you want.

If someone gives you information which is of concern to them you should treat it seriously in accordance with this procedure and not dismiss it without giving it proper thought.

6. How Warren Road Primary School will respond

The action taken by Warren Road Primary School will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised might:

- be investigated internally, (this is the most likely option)
- be referred to the Police
- be referred to the external auditor
- be referred to the DFE
- form the subject of an independent inquiry
- or any combination of the above

In order to protect individuals and Warren Road Primary School, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. Within ten working days of a concern being received, where appropriate, Warren Road Primary School will write to you:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter
- telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made; and
- telling you whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.

The amount of contact between the employees or trustees considering the issues and yourself will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from you.

When any meeting is arranged, you have the right, if you wish, to be accompanied by a union or professional association representative or a friend who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates. Warren Road Primary School will take steps to minimise any difficulties that you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, Warren Road Primary School will advise you about the procedure. Warren Road Primary School acknowledges the need to provide you with assurance that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, you will receive appropriate information about the extent and outcomes of any investigations.

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

While issues raised anonymously will still be looked into, it is much better for complainants to identify themselves so the matter can be properly dealt with. Everything possible will be done to protect your identity, but you may be requested to act as a witness if disciplinary or other proceedings follow the investigation of the issues you have raised.

If you raise an issue under this procedure in good faith and believing it to be true the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects you from any repercussions on your present position or future career. The Act does not protect anyone who is acting maliciously, making false allegations or who is seeking personal gain.

7. Employees who are the subject of complaints

If you are the subject of a complaint under this procedure, it will be investigated in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedure. This means you will have all the rights contained in the procedure such as representation at the investigatory interview.

8. How to take the matter further or seek external advice

This procedure is intended to provide an effective way for you to expose malpractice in the workplace. If you are not satisfied with the procedure and if you have concerns about fraud or corruption you can contact Warren Road Primary School's external Auditor.

- UHY Hacker Young, Thames House, Roman Square, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4BJ Tel: 01795 475363
- Audit Commission Complaints Unit; Audit Commission, 3rd Floor, Fry Building, Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF
- DFE (Department of Education) Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT Tel: 087000 12345
- The Police

Appendix B: Whistleblowing Flowchart

