PERRAN-AR-WORTHAL CP SCHOOL
Every Moment Matters

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING PROCEDURE ('WHISTLE-BLOWING')

Contents

Introduction	1
Aims and scope of this procedure	1
Confidentiality	2
Anonymous allegations	2
Untrue allegations	2
How to raise a concern	2
How the governing body will respond	3
The responsible officer	3
How the matter can be taken further	3

Introduction

1. The governing body is committed to high standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect staff who have serious concerns about any aspect of the school's work to come forward and voice those concerns. This procedure makes it clear that staff can do so without fear of victimization, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. It is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise serious problems within the school rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

2. This procedure is based on the model provided by the local authority, which has been discussed with the relevant trade unions and professional organisations and has their support.[1]

3. The governing body will appoint a governor with specific responsibility for this procedure.

Aims and scope of this procedure

4. This procedure aims to:

- encourage staff to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- provide avenues for staff to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- ensure that staff receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied

[1] Dated 18 September 2009.

- reassure staff that they will be protected from possible victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that any disclosure is made in good faith.

5. The procedure is intended to supplement, rather than replace, the existing complaints, disciplinary and grievance procedures. It is intended to cover serious concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures and may relate to something which:

- is against council's standing orders, financial regulations and policies
- is against the school's policies and procedures
- falls below established standards of practice
- amounts to improper conduct, including something that is believed may be against the law, a health and safety risk, damaging to the environment, misuse of public money, corruption or unethical conduct or abuse of pupils or other service users.

Confidentiality

6. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made to protect the identity of the whistle-blower if so wished. At the appropriate time, however, a whistle-blower may need to provide a statement or act as a witness and will be expected to co-operate fully with the investigation and disclose all relevant information.

Anonymous allegations

7. This procedure encourages staff to put their name to their concern as anonymous allegations may often be difficult to substantiate or prove. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be investigated unless the school's monitoring governor, in consultation with the chair of governors, agrees there is insufficient evidence to proceed.

Untrue allegations

8. If a concern is raised in good faith, but it is not subsequently confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the whistle-blower. If, however, an allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken.

How to raise a concern

9. As a first step, staff should normally raise concerns with their head of department or line manager and inform them that this procedure is being used. However, it is recognised that on occasion this may not be appropriate. A number of alternative contacts may be appropriate depending on the nature of the concern. For example, staff could approach a more senior manager in the school such as the head teacher or deputy head teacher or any school governor. In exceptional circumstances, staff may contact the county solicitor (the council's 'monitoring officer'), head of personnel services, county treasurer, the head of internal audit, members of the executive committee (the 'portfolio' holders) or their local county councillor.

10. Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.

11. Although not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of their concerns, staff will need to demonstrate reasonable grounds to raise them.

12. Where staff fail to report their concerns, they may become themselves implicated and consequently governors may treat failure by an employee to report such matters as a serious matter which could lead to disciplinary action.

13. Staff may wish to obtain assistance in putting forward their concern from CSF Personnel, a trade union representative or a colleague. Staff may choose to be represented by a trade union representative or colleague at any meetings which are required.

How the governing body will respond

14. In order to protect individuals and the governors, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

15. The person with whom a concern has been raised will inform the relevant governor of the facts.

16. The governor will write to the member of staff raising the concern within ten working days with the following:

- acknowledgement that the concern has been received
- an indication of how the concern will be dealt with
- an estimate of how long it will take to provide a full response
- whether any initial enquiries have been made
- whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.

17. The governors will inform the member of staff in writing of the outcome of any investigation, or any action taken, subject to the constraints of confidentiality and the law.

The responsible officer

18. The school's monitoring governor has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy within the school. That governor will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes and will report as necessary to the governing body. The recording and reporting procedure will be in a form which ensures confidentiality.

How the matter can be taken further

19. This procedure is intended to provide a route within the school to raise concerns. If it is felt that the concern has not been addressed adequately, it may be raised with an independent body such as the district auditor, trade union, local citizens' advice bureau, a relevant professional body or regulatory organisation, a relevant voluntary organisation, the police or the local government ombudsman.

20. Staff have a duty to the school not to disclose confidential information. This does not prevent concerns being raised with an independent body referred to above, or Protect Advice Line: 020 3117 2520 (* option 1)or more information is available at http://www.pcaw.co.uk/, a registered charity which advises on serious malpractice within the workplace in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.