



Winlaton West Lane Community Primary School

	Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting) Policy
Issue date:	March 2025
Review period:	2 years / following significant event

- 1 The school and Gateshead Council are determined to ensure that its employees act properly. This policy is designed to give employees the chance to draw attention to concerns about wrong or unacceptable practice. It is not about telling tales on colleagues but aims to ensure that work is carried out honestly and well.
- 2 All concerns will be recorded and investigated properly. will, so far as is possible, remain confidential and those raising them will be treated fairly by the school / Council.
- 3 The policy covers but isn't limited to:
 - a. Any unlawful act
 - b. Breaches of other policies, codes of practice or acceptable standards of behaviour
 - c. Misuse of assets
 - d. Actions which are possibly harmful
 - e. Significant damage to property
 - f. Abuses of position, power or authority
 - g. Unfair discrimination
 - h. Unethical conduct
- 4 The policy is meant to add to existing procedures (e.g. for dealing with grievances). It should only be used where employees reporting concerns feel that other procedures cannot be used.
- 5 It is often employees who are best placed to know of any concerns. There is therefore an expectation that employees report their concerns; failure to do so may be considered a serious matter. The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take action.
- 6 Although employees are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of a concern, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are

reasonable grounds for concern. We recognise the potential vulnerability of employees who express concerns under this procedure and will not tolerate any attempt to harass or victimise them.

- 7 Where a concern is found to be malicious or has been raised in bad faith, this will be regarded as a serious matter and could lead to disciplinary action.
- 8 The policy encourages individuals to put their name to the concern wherever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at our discretion; In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include the seriousness of the issue, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming details from attributable sources.
- 9 The person raising concerns should provide all relevant facts and the reasons for concern. Employees are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but they will need to demonstrate sufficient and genuine grounds for concern.
- 10 The person receiving the concern will
 - a. Record it.
 - b. Ensure confidentiality, so far as is reasonably possible in dealing properly with it.
 - c. Make initial enquiries to decide what investigation will be appropriate. Concerns which come within the scope of existing procedures (e.g. child protection issues) will normally be considered under those procedures.
 - d. Report to the Chair of the Governing Body where the investigation identifies a serious cause for concern. Where a concern involves theft, fraud, financial irregularities, bribery or corruption, the Strategic Director, Finance & I.C.T. should be notified before proceeding with any further investigation. The Director will then take such steps as may be considered necessary.
- 11 Within 10 working days of a concern being received we will in writing acknowledge receipt, indicate how we propose to deal with it, give an estimate of how long it will take, say when a further update will be given.
- 12 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.
- 13 If a meeting is arranged between the person responsible for dealing with the concern and the employee raising it, then the employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a friend who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.
- 14 We will confirm in writing to those raising concerns that they have been properly dealt with. Information about outcomes of investigations will be given unless this is not possible for legal reasons.