

Shelton Junior School



Whistleblowing Policy

Headteacher Approval  Name: Mr Jon Bacon Date: 28/01/2021	Governor Approval  Name: Ms K Phillips Date: 28/01/2021	Shelton Junior School <i>Whistleblowing Policy</i> Last Reviewed: January 2021 Review date: January 2022
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Contents

Policy review dates and changes	2
Introduction	4
When might the Whistleblowing Policy apply?	4
What action should the whistleblower take?	5
How will the matter be progressed?	6
Respecting confidentiality.....	6
Raising unfounded malicious concerns.....	6
Conclusion.....	6
Related Policies and Documentation:.....	7

Introduction

The staff and governors of Shelton Junior School seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. In the event that members of school staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, Shelton Junior School has established the following whistleblowing policy which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion. The procedures reflect the principles in Sir Robert Francis' Freedom to Speak Up Review (2015, www.freedomtospeakup.org.uk) and are suitably referenced in staff training.

Throughout this policy, the term **whistleblower** denotes the person raising the concern or making the complaint. It is not meant in a pejorative sense and is entirely consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies published in May 1996.

Shelton Junior School is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. Shelton Junior School recognises that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the school.

Shelton Junior School is committed to creating a climate of trust and openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved. The provisions of this policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety and not matters of more general grievance which would be dealt with under Shelton Junior School's grievance procedures.

When might the Whistleblowing Policy apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which Shelton Junior School considers should be dealt with under this policy includes:

- someone's health and safety is in danger
- damage to the environment
- manipulation of accounting records and finances
- inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- decision-making for personal gain
- any criminal activity
- abuse of position
- fraud and deceit
- serious breaches of school procedures
- where the welfare of children is being negatively affected

What action should the whistleblower take?

Shelton Junior School encourages the whistleblower to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and give an explanation for the behaviour or activity. Shelton Junior School has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the whistleblower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Headteacher	Mr Jon Bacon (07940 328 538 or head@sheltonj.derby.sch.uk)
Chair of Governors	Mrs Karen Phillips (07963 126256 or KPhillips@sheltonj.derby.sch.uk)
Derby City Council, Head of Audit	01332 293111
Union or Professional Association	
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 0280285
Whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work	www.pcaw.org.uk

The whistleblower may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in written form marked private and confidential and addressed to one of the above named individuals. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible.

Alternatively if the whistleblower considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise within the internal environment of the school, the matter should be directed in the first instance to the Council's Head of Audit. The Council has its own procedures for dealing with such matters and will ensure every effort to respect the confidentiality of the whistleblower. The Council will ensure relevant officers of the Department for Education are informed as appropriate.

In addition, information and advice can be obtained from the charity Public Concern at Work. This charity offers free legal advice in certain circumstances to people concerned about serious malpractice at work. Their literature states that matters are handled in strict confidence and without obligation. Contact details for the charity are as follows:

Public Concern at Work
CAN Mezzanine 7 - 14 Great Dover Street London SE1 4YR
Telephone number 020 7404 6609
Advice line: whistle@pcaw.org.uk

How will the matter be progressed?

The individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation (the investigating officer(s)) will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of school staff, legal or personnel advisors, the police, the Department for Education and Employment, the Council.

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigating officer(s), possibly in conjunction with the governing body, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third party referral such as the police.

The whistleblower will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the governing body and the Council. If the whistleblower is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the investigating officer(s), the governing body and/or directed to the Council.

Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible Shelton Junior School seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistleblower and will as far as possible protect them from reprisals.

Shelton Junior School will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the whistleblower or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

Raising unfounded malicious concerns

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances.

Conclusion

Existing good practice within Shelton Junior School in terms of its systems of internal control, both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the school operates, ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur. This whistleblowing policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised

confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the school. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.

Related Policies and Documentation:

This policy enables Shelton Junior School to carry out our functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children under sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act (2002). The policy is in line with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- The Children Act (1989) and Children Act (2004)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)
- Information Sharing (2018)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
- The Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (2015)
- The Prevent Duty: departmental advice for schools and childcare providers (2015)
- Prevent Duty Guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales (2015)
- Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information (2015)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003) and Serious Crime Act (2015)

Please refer to Shelton Junior School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which is consistent with Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children web-based procedures which can be found via the school website: www.sheltonj.derby.sch.uk and are also located on the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website: www.ddscp.org.uk.