



Cranbrook
Primary School

Whistleblowing Policy

Approved by the Governing Body on **3rd December 2019**

To be reviewed: Autumn Term 2020

Signed by the Chair of Governors:

Sonia Gable

CRANBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL – WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The staff and governors of Cranbrook Primary School seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard for high standards of high conduct and integrity. In the event that members of school staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of activities which gives cause of concern. Cranbrook Primary School has established the following whistle blowing policy, or code of practice, 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.

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

Cranbrook Primary 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 grievance which would be dealt with under the Cranbrook Primary School grievance procedures.

Since June 2015, schools must report any concerns relating to any forms of extremism or radicalisation in accordance with the 'Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015' which places a duty on all schools to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

'This policy has been developed in accordance with the legislation and guidance outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2019'.

When might the whistle blowing policy apply?

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

- 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 which may advantage a particular party (for example tampering with tender documentation, failure to register personal interest).
- Concern regarding safeguarding of children or child protections matters – see Safeguarding Policy
- Concern regarding the risk of exposure to radicalisation or extremist ideologies – see Prevent Policy

What action should the whistle blower take?

Cranbrook Primary School encourages the whistle blower 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.

Cranbrook Primary School has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the whistle blower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Name and Position	
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Jas Leverton
Headteacher	Jas Leverton
Chair of Governors	Sonia Gable
Chair of Resources & Organisation Committee (including Finance)	Syeda Akhter

The whistle blower 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 whistle blower considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise with the internal environment of the school, the matter should be directed in the first instance to:

For all concerns	The LA Chief Auditor	020 8708 3384 (24 answerphone) Internal: 83130 e-mail: whistleblow@redbridge.gov.uk
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Cranbrook Primary School would prefer that a serious concern is raised rather than not at all. Despite the assurances, the whistle blower may feel that it is more appropriate to raise the concern with an external organisation, such as a regulator. It is, of course, open for them to do so provided they have sufficient evidence to support the concern. Cranbrook Primary School strongly advises that before reporting the concern externally, the whistle blower seeks advice from one of the following:

- The Audit Commission, “prescribed persons” under the Public Interest Disclosure Act, have set up an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Unit which can be contacted on: 020 7630 1019

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 and the LEA.

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 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 whistle blower 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 LEA.

The LEA has its own procedures for dealing with such matters and will ensure every effort to respect the confidentiality of the whistle blower. If the whistle blower is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation, Cranbrook Primary School will prefer that the whistle blower raised this with them or the LEA, explaining why this is the case. The concern will be looked at again if there is good reason to do so.

If the whistle blower 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 LEA.

Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible, Cranbrook Primary School seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistle blower and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals. Cranbrook Primary School will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the whistle blower or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances. The Public Interest Disclosure Act became law in 1999 and gives a ‘worker’ the right not to be victimised or dismissed because he or she has made a protected disclosure.

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 with Cranbrook Primary 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 whistle blowing policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentiality 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.