

Signature and date [FGB/committee chair]

Slimbridge Primary School Policy
Approved: September 2019
To review: Annually

Slimbridge Primary School Whistleblowing Policy

This policy has been agreed and discussed with the school governors, the staff and head teacher and will be reviewed annually.

All staff or volunteers must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult, this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Staff or volunteers may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues, may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young person who is targeted. The welfare of children must be safeguarded.

Reasons for whistle blowing

- each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- to prevent the problem worsening or widening
- to protect or reduce risks to others
- to prevent becoming implicated yourself

What stops people from whistle blowing

- starting a chain of events which spirals
- disrupting the work or project
- fear of getting it wrong
- fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- fear of not being believed

How to raise a concern

- voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken
- try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why
- approach your immediate manager, head teacher or school governor
- if your concern is about your immediate manager, head teacher, or a governor (or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school) contact the Safeguarding team for your area
- make sure you get a satisfactory response - don't let matters rest
- ideally, you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history
- give names, dates and places where you can

A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next?

- you should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- no action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
- malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence

Self Reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain

confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager, HR department and/or your professional or trade union.

Don't think what if I'm wrong - think what if I'm right?

"Absolutely without fail - challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong" (reproduced with acknowledgement to "Sounding the Alarm" – Barnardos)

Read this policy in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection/safeguarding
- Work Life Balance
- Early Help
- Online Safety
- Intimate Care Policy
- Finance