

# CHRIST CHURCH SCHOOL WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

## Introduction

The staff and governors of Christ Church 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, Christ Church School has established the following whistleblowing 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.

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.

Christ Church School is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. Christ Church 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.

Christ Church 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 the Christ Church School grievance procedures.

## When might the whistleblowing policy apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which Christ Church 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 a personal interest)

## What action should the whistleblower take?

Christ Church 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.

Christ Church School has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters



been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the governing body and the LA.

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 LA.

### **Respecting confidentiality**

Wherever possible Christ Church School seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistleblower and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals. Christ Church 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 Christ Church 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.

*Reviewed and approved by Governors Finance Committee and Governing Body in January 2015.*