



Whistle Blowing Policy

December 2024

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Part A - Policy

Policy Statement

Jubilee Primary School is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of probity and integrity regarding its practices. We recognise that it is important for all employees to have a means by which they can raise serious concerns about any aspect of school life. Jubilee Primary School further acknowledges its obligations under the Public Disclosure Act (1998) to ensure mechanisms are in place through which concerns relating to matters of public interest can be raised.

Jubilee Primary School encourages employees to raise any concerns internally at the earliest opportunity rather than disregarding issues or raising the matter externally. We will address concerns seriously and undertake as much investigation as is necessary given the circumstances – this may include referral to external agencies. Jubilee Primary School will endeavour to advise an employee of any actions / outcome arising from a complaint where appropriate. We will provide reasonable support to an employee who raises a concern.

Jubilee Primary School will ensure that where a concern is raised, an employee will be protected from detriment, harassment and victimisation. It is recognised that in certain cases it may be appropriate to consider concerns raised on a confidential or anonymous basis.

This policy and procedure explains:

- The mechanism for raising concerns
- The range of responses Jubilee Primary School may take upon receipt of concerns
- The support and protection available to employees

Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all employees of Jubilee Primary School. (This policy also applies to agency workers, volunteers, contractors and others working on school premises).

Public Concern at Work defines whistleblowing as:

'The raising of a concern either within the work place or externally, about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrong doing which affects others.'

The Whistleblowing Procedure provides a means for Employees to raise concerns about conduct or situations which they believe are inappropriate. Concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- Conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur - as a result of which Jubilee Primary School fails to comply with a legal obligation
- Acts or potential acts of fraud / corruption / bribery or the misuse of public funds / resources
- Miscarriages of justice
- Past, current or likely health and safety risks
- Concerns about any aspect of service provision
- Concerns of a safeguarding / child protection nature

- Failure to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the 'Prevent Duty')
- Unethical or unprofessional conduct that causes concern
- The deliberate concealment of information relating to concerns listed above

Concerns relating to an individual's own employment should be raised through Jubilee Primary School's grievance and harassment procedures.

Employees may raise concerns about the practice of anyone who works for or on behalf of Jubilee Primary School including:

- All Employees
- Governors
- Volunteers
- Contractors

Concerns that employees have may be raised individually or collectively. If collective concerns are raised staff should be prepared to give their own account during any investigation, should this be required.

There is no time limit for raising a concern – however employees are encouraged to do so at the earliest opportunity since it may be difficult to address a matter if a significant time has elapsed.

Responsibilities of Jubilee Primary School

- To foster a culture where employees can feel confident in raising concerns
- To ensure concerns are fully considered, investigated as necessary and action taken as appropriate
- To ensure that Employees raising concerns receive feedback on any action taken where appropriate
- To make employees aware how they can take matters further if they are not satisfied
- To reassure employees that they will be protected against detriment and reprisal should they raise a concern

Responsibilities of the Employee

- To raise concerns only where there is a reasonable suspicion for doing so
- Not to knowingly raise a false allegation with malicious or vexatious intent
- To engage with internal/external actions to address any concerns – by attending meetings and/or participating in any investigation

Responsible Officer and Monitoring of Complaints

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy and procedure.

The Headteacher will ensure the effective implementation of the whistleblowing arrangements, providing training as appropriate, and undertake an annual audit of the whistleblowing arrangements, reporting the outcome to the Board of trustees.

The Headteacher will consider:

- The number and types of concerns raised and the outcomes of the investigations.
- Feedback from individuals who have used the arrangements
- Any complaints of victimisation
- Any complaints of failures to maintain confidentiality
- Any relevant litigation
- The level of staff awareness, trust and confidence in the arrangements
- Any reporting will not identify the parties to the complaint.

Part B – Procedure

Raising a Concern

Wherever possible employees should initially raise concerns openly with their line manager or Headteacher.

In instances of serious concern or where the complaint involves the line manager or Headteacher complaints may be raised with the Chair of Trustees.

Should the Headteacher have concerns – these should be raised with the Chair of Trustees in the first instance.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the appropriate internal contacts

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.

A concern raised in writing should:

- Set out the background and history of the concern - giving names, dates and places where possible
- Give the reason why the employee is particularly concerned about the situation

For clarity it would be helpful for the Employee to state that they wish their concerns to be addressed under the whistleblowing procedure

An employee is not expected to prove the validity of their concern, however they will need to demonstrate that there are sufficient and reasonable grounds for their complaint. Further investigation may be hampered if there is only limited evidence to support the concern raised.

How Jubilee Primary School will respond

Preliminary enquiries may be made to decide on the appropriate course of action. This may necessitate further discussion with the employee who has raised the concern. The person raising the concern may be joined by a representative.

On occasion it may not be appropriate for the person who receives the complaint to progress the concern and the matter may be referred to another individual within Jubilee Primary School or an external organisation.

It may be possible to resolve some concerns informally by agreed action without the need for further formal investigation.

Where it is not possible to resolve the matter informally, the action taken by Jubilee Primary School will depend on the nature of the concern and may include:

- Undertaking an internal management or disciplinary investigation
- Referral to an external auditor
- Referral to another regulatory authority
- Referral to the Police
- Referral to the Local Authority

Within 10 working days of receipt of any concern, the person progressing the matter will write to the employee to:

- Acknowledge that the concern has been received
- Indicate how and through whom Jubilee Primary School proposes to address the matter including whether further investigation or referral to another organisation will be made
- Give an estimate of how long the investigation will take
- Indicate whether further information will be sought from the employee and the arrangements for obtaining this where known

The form of further contact between the employee and the person progressing the complaint will depend on the nature of the matter raised and the follow up action required.

In instances where an investigation is prolonged or referral to an external agency takes place – arrangements will be made to provide the employee with situational updates as far as is practicable.

On occasion the person considering the complaint may determine that it is not appropriate for further action to be taken. This may include where:

- There is no evidence that malpractice has occurred
- The matter is / has been the subject of internal proceedings under another school policy
- The matter is / has been the subject of external legal proceedings / been referred to another external agency
- A false and malicious or vexatious complaint has been made

Notification of the Outcome of the Concern

Jubilee Primary School recognises that an employee raising a concern would wish to be assured that the matter has been fully addressed. Feedback will be provided on the outcome of the complaint, wherever possible.

In some circumstances however it may not be appropriate or permissible to share this information (for example where legal/disciplinary or regulatory authority action is pending or if sharing information may infringe the duty of confidence owed to a third

party). Where it is not appropriate to provide detailed feedback the employee will be advised that the matter has been addressed or concluded as far as is practicable. Where a matter is not to be considered further the employee who raised the complaint will be advised of this in writing.

How the matter may be taken further

This procedure is intended to provide employees with a mechanism to raise concerns internally within Jubilee Primary School.

Should this process be exhausted and the employee feels that matters have not been fully/appropriately addressed or that concerns are ongoing they may wish to raise the matter outside of Jubilee Primary School.

Appropriate contacts are listed at Appendix A.

An employee who intends to raise a concern externally is encouraged to consider carefully whether this is the most appropriate form of action to resolve the issue and whether all reasonable internal steps have been taken.

If a matter is raised outside of Jubilee Primary School, an employee should take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidential or privileged information is not disclosed.

Protection and Support for Employees

Jubilee Primary School will take reasonable measures to support and protect Employees who raise concerns.

Protection from Detriment

Employees raising a concern with reasonable suspicion for doing so will not be subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Should an employee believe they have been subject to detriment or retribution they should report this to the Chair of Trustees who may address the matter in accordance with Jubilee Primary School's disciplinary procedure.

No action will be taken against an Employee where concerns raised are subsequently unproven.

However disciplinary action may be taken against individuals who knowingly make 'false, malicious and/or vexatious allegations'.

Should an employee commit a criminal offence in raising a concern (e.g. accepting a bribe or an act of corruption) – protection from detriment may be lost and the employee may be subject to Jubilee Primary School's disciplinary procedures.

Confidentiality

The best way to raise a concern is to do so openly. Openness makes it easier for Jubilee Primary School to assess and investigate the issue. However, it is recognised that there may be some circumstances where an employee would prefer to raise a concern in confidence. Employees should make Jubilee Primary School aware of this when raising their concern.

Where appropriate every effort and consideration will be given to arrangements to maintain the employee's confidentiality – including off site meetings where appropriate.

Every effort will be made not to reveal the employee's identity, without their prior consent, if this is their wish.

However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if the concern is subject to an external/police investigation where disclosure is required. An employee will be advised should there be a possibility that their confidentiality cannot be maintained.

Anonymous Concerns

Employees are encouraged to put their name to any allegation where possible. Anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at Jubilee Primary School's discretion.

In exercising the discretion, the following factors may be considered:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern; and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

It should be noted that it may be more difficult to address the concern, support an employee or advise them of the outcome where a concern is reported anonymously.

Support

Employees who raise a concern may wish to make use of the confidential counselling service provided by Jubilee Primary School, if appropriate.

Other sources of support are provided in Appendix A.

Should an employee be required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings – consideration will be given to appropriate support.

Other Concurrent Processes

Where a complaint is raised under the whistleblowing procedure this will not in itself be sufficient to halt any other ongoing processes relating to absence, conduct, performance or redundancy. However, each case will be considered on its merits to ensure that Jubilee Primary School is acting reasonably.

Record Keeping

Notes may be taken of all meetings with the employee held under this procedure. Where notes are taken a copy will be made available to the employee.

All records will be treated as confidential and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) which provides individual's with the right to request and have access to certain data.

A central record of whistleblowing will be maintained by the Board of trustees. This record will include, a summary of the concern raised, action taken and the resulting outcome. Senior staff or Governors who receive whistleblowing concerns must ensure the concern is recorded.

Governor Approval and Review Dates

This document was approved by the full board of trustees in December 2024. It is due for review when changes are made.

Changes since the last version

Version/Date	Page	Amendment
V3	10	Details in Appendix A

Appendix A: Contact Details

It is the usual expectation that an employee will have endeavoured to raise the concern internally within Jubilee Primary School before referring the matter to an external organisation.

Internal

Headteacher

Contact: headteacher@jubileeprimaryschool.org.uk

Telephone Number: 01622 808873

Chair of Trustees

Jubilee Primary School,
Gatland Lane
Maidstone
ME16 8PF

External

Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Education
Kent County Council
Sessions House
County Road
Maidstone
ME14 1XQ

Via KCC's Whistleblowing Helpline on 03000 414 500 or by emailing internalaudit@kent.gov.uk

Contact	Telephone	Email / Website
Public Concern at Work	0207 404 6609	www.pcaw.org.uk
Department for Education	0370 000 2288	www.gov.uk/contact-dfe
Ofsted	0300 123 3155	whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
Office of Qualifications & Examinations Regulation	0300 303 3344	Public.Enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk

A comprehensive listing of 'prescribed persons and bodies' to which external disclosures may be made is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies

Employees may also wish to raise a concern with:

- An elected member of the local authority
- A solicitor
- The police

Support for Employees

- Confidential Counselling Service - Schools to add details
- Teachers Support Line www.teachersupport.info;
- Citizen's Advice Bureau www.citizensadvice.org.uk