

# St. Aloysius' Catholic Junior School

## Whistleblowing (Protected Disclosure) Policy

### Whistle-blowing - School's Code of Conduct

If you believe that there has been any fraud, irregularity, corruption or the law has been broken, you will be able to phone a call-centre and give information in confidence. This service is provided by an independent organisation and you will not have to give your name unless you want to.

### Introduction

This section contains guidance on the School's approach to whistleblowing. It sets out the types of concerns that are covered, the process that you should follow to report something and when you would be protected for raising a concern using the process.

### What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is a common phrase used when someone makes a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The School encourages an open culture in all its dealings between staff, managers and all people with whom it comes into contact. Effective and honest communication is essential if malpractice is to be effectively dealt with. The information below provides guidelines to all staff who feel they need to raise certain issues or concerns in confidence.

Examples of malpractice include:

- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutes, e.g. disregarding tendering processes
- Dangers to health & safety, e.g. padlocking fire exits
- Dangers to the environment, e.g. inappropriate use of chemicals
- Criminal activity, e.g. theft, fraud, bribery, child abuse
- Breach of School's Code of Conduct, e.g. Improper conduct, corruption or unethical behaviour such as acceptance of gifts/hospitality
- Waste or frivolous expenditure
- Attempts to conceal any of these

If your concern relates to a grievance about your personal position you should use our [Grievance Procedure](#) instead.

### How do I raise a concern?

As a first step, you should normally raise the concern with your manager. However, this depends on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues and who you believe to be involved in the alleged malpractice. For example, if you believe that a Governor or others in management are involved, you may wish to use Expolink instead.

Expolink is an impartial external organisation that provides staff with a confidential 'protected disclosure' service. You can contact Expolink on **0800 374199**.

## **Will it be protected?**

The School recognises that your decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. This may be because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice.

You should always raise concerns using our internal procedure rather than report the issue to an external organisation. Any disclosure will not be 'protected' if you do not use our internal procedure.

The School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation (including informal pressure) and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern and:

- make the disclosure in good faith;
- reasonably believe that the information is substantially true; and
- reasonably believe you are making the disclosure using the correct procedure.

In making a disclosure, you should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information.

The School recognises that there may be circumstances where you raise an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by an investigation. If this were the case, no action would be taken.

If, however, you make malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if you persist with making them, disciplinary action may be taken.

## **Will it be confidential?**

When you raise a concern but do not want your name to be disclosed, the School will do its best to protect your identity. However, if we feel that a formal investigation process may be necessary, we may require a statement by you to form part of the evidence otherwise we might not be able to proceed with further action.

One of the aims of this policy is to encourage you to put your name, with confidence, to any allegation whenever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the School's discretion.

When considering anonymous allegations, a number of factors would be taken into account and may include:

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

## **How will my concern be dealt with?**

Your manager will take the appropriate steps to investigate the allegations. If reported to Expolink, they will report the allegation to nominated officers within the School. These officers will treat this information confidentially and will take appropriate action to investigate the allegations made.

The action taken by the School will depend on the nature of the concern. We will make initial enquiries to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. If an allegation or concern falls within the scope of other specific procedures it will be referred for consideration under those procedures, e.g. the disciplinary or grievance procedure.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any investigation commences e.g. health and safety issues.

Where the concern/allegation is raised internally, we will keep you advised of progress. If you have not provided your name, you will be given the opportunity to contact Expolink for an update. However, please note that we may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this would infringe a duty of confidentiality owed by us to someone else.