



Our Christian Values

God teaches us to forgive and always accept **forgiveness**

We receive the Christian way of life as a gift from God (**responsibility**)

Each of us will give an account of himself to God (**responsibility**)

We believe and **trust** in God who loves each one of us

We are all unique children of God (**acceptance**)

Whatever you wish that men would do to you do to them (**compassion**)

We are all equally precious and loved by God (**acceptance**)

Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

Here at Burham CE primary School we are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage employees and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns. In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis.

This procedure encourages employees to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimization, internally within KCC rather than overlooking a problem or raising the matter outside.

It applies to all employees, agency workers and those contractors working on our premises. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with us on their own premises.

Other Complaints Procedures

This procedure is separate from our complaints procedures and other statutory reporting procedures applying to some directorates. The Headteacher is responsible for making service users aware of these procedures. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affects an individual.

Aim and Scope

This procedure aims to ensure individuals are:

- encouraged to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice.

- provided with avenues to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- given a response to their concerns and are aware of how to pursue them if not satisfied.
- reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimization if they have a reasonable belief any disclosure has been made in good faith.

There are existing procedures in place to enable individuals to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment including issues relating to harassment and bullying. This procedure is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- 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, the result of which we fail to comply with a legal obligation.
- disclosures related past, currents or likely miscarriages of justice.
- past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- past, current or likely damage to the environment.

Concerns about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of any member of staff or governors can be reported under the confidential disclosure procedure. This may about something that you:

- feel uncomfortable about in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe we subscribe to
- are against our standing orders or policies
- falls below established standards of practice
- amounts to improper conduct.

Our safety complaints procedure should be used to raise any issues, concerns or complaints of a health and safety nature which are not confidential.

Confidentiality

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness.

Anonymous Allegations

Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those that are attributed to a named individual. However, anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at our discretion.

In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

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

Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith that is not subsequently confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken. Disciplinary action will only be taken against individuals who knowingly make false, malicious or vexatious allegations.

How to Raise a Concern

General

Concerns can 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
- the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

The earlier a concern is raised the easier it is to take action. Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.

A professional union or association may raise a matter on behalf of an employee.

Step One - Raising a Concern

Whenever possible you should raise your concern with your immediate line manager. If this is not appropriate, you should approach the following according to the nature of the concern:

Education & Libraries - contact Grahame Ward on 01622 696551 or Marilyn Hodges on 01622 694992

Social Services - contact Hilary Francombe (West Kent) on 01732 525188, Ann Kitto (Mid Kent) on 01233 652144, or Anthony Mort (County Services) on 01622 696363

Strategic Planning - contact Alan Loft on 01622 221955

Corporate Services - contact Geoff Wild on 01622 694302

Senior management contact points:

- Peter Gilroy (Chief Executive) on 01622 694000
- Christine Webster (Chief Internal Auditor) on 01622 694580

Independent helpline - Public Concern at Work on 020 7040 6609

KCC has an anti-fraud and corruption policy statement and all suspected financial irregularities must be reported to the Chief Internal Auditor.

Step Two - How we will respond

The action we take will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may :

- be investigated internally by the governors, Internal Audit, Headteacher or through the disciplinary process.
- be referred to the police
- be referred to the External Auditor
- form the subject of an independent inquiry.

In order to protect individuals and the authority, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (child protection) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

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 is conducted.

Within 10 working days, the responsible person will write to you:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- indicating how we propose to deal with the matter
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.

Contact

The amount of contact between the officers considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought.

Attending Meetings

When any meeting is arranged you have the right to be accompanied by a union representative or a workplace colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

Support

We will take steps to minimize any difficulties you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, we will advise or arrange for you to have advice about the procedure.

We will not tolerate harassment or victimization and will take action to protect individuals who raise a concern in good faith.

We accept that you need to be assured that concerns will be properly addressed and, subject to legal constraints, will provide information about the outcomes of any investigations.

How the Matter can be Taken Further

This procedure is intended to provide individuals with an avenue to raise concerns with the authority. If you are not satisfied, and feel it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points:

- Public Concern at Work - 020 7404 6609
- Audit Commission - 020 7630 1019
- A local Kent County Council Member
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organizations
- A solicitor
- The police

If a matter is taken outside the authority, you must take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidential or privileged information is not disclosed. If in doubt, check with the named KCC contacts

Public Interest Disclosure

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives employees two safeguards in respect of disclosures of information:

- An employee is entitled not to be subjected to any detriment by virtue of having made a protected disclosure
- The dismissal of any KCC employee directly due to the individual having made such a disclosure will automatically be unfair.

This policy will be updated with new guidance before the yearly review if necessary.

September 2008

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