



## **Ridgeway Primary School Whistleblowing Policy**

Ridgeway Primary School is committed to operating with honesty and integrity. We expect all colleagues to operate on this basis and to adhere to the council's policies, procedures and code of conduct. Fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing will not be tolerated.

**The aim of this policy is to encourage colleagues to report suspected wrongdoing internally rather than externally as a first resort.** Colleagues who wish to report a suspected wrong doing should in the first instance report their concerns to the Headteacher; Mrs Joanne Jelves. If the concerns are relating to the Headteacher then this should be reported to the Chair of Governors; Mrs Pam Potter.

**Any concerns raised under this policy will be treated seriously and dealt with confidentially.**

Any colleague raising a concern under this policy will not be treated less favourably for raising concerns. This means that any colleague who raises a concern under this policy will not be subjected to a detriment nor will they be dismissed for doing so.

This policy applies to employees of Ridgeway Primary School and all of its Extended Services, referred to in this policy as colleagues including agency workers, trainees or anyone working on a casual basis.

The policy and procedure applies to all colleagues, regardless of length of service.

### **What is whistleblowing?**

Whistleblowing is when a worker reports suspected wrongdoing at work.

For example

- A criminal offence; and/or
- A miscarriage of justice; and/or
- Damage to the environment; and/or
- Breach of a legal obligation; and/or
- A danger to health and safety; and/or
- A deliberate concealment of any of the above

A colleague can report things that aren't right, are illegal or if anyone at work is neglecting their duties, including:

- someone's health and safety is in danger;
- damage to the environment;
- a criminal offence;
- the company isn't obeying the law;
- covering up a wrongdoing;

A colleague who has a reasonable belief that a wrongdoing has or may be committed and raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above, is a 'whistleblower' and is protected under this policy.

**If the whistleblower believes that the internal reporting of their concerns has not been dealt with sufficiently, they can then report their concerns externally to Staffordshire County Council Whistle Blowing Team.** The Council will, **at its discretion**, consider disclosures that are made anonymously, although such disclosures are inevitably much less powerful. The Council will also treat every disclosure in confidence, and only reveal the identity of the person making it if absolutely necessary (e.g. if required in connection with legal action).

### **Rights of the Whistleblower**

- All colleagues are encouraged to use this policy to raise genuine concerns and will not be treated less favourably for doing so, even if they are mistaken in their belief.
- Any colleague who raises a concern under this policy will not be subjected to a detriment nor will they be dismissed for doing so. Any colleague who believes that they have been subjected to a detriment for raising a complaint should raise the matter with the named Monitoring Officer.
- Victimisation of a whistleblower by any other colleague for raising a concern under this policy will in itself constitute a disciplinary offence.
- Where the council believes that a colleague has knowingly made a false allegation or acted maliciously, the colleague will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal for gross misconduct.
- **This policy does not deal with any complaints relating to a colleague's own treatment at work or own contract of employment. Those matters should be raised under the Grievance procedure or the Bullying and Harassment procedure, as appropriate.** An exception to this will be when the matter of concern arises from the colleagues own treatment at work that is arising from the whistleblowing matter they have raised previously.

### **Making a Whistleblowing Complaint**

To make a whistleblowing complaint the whistleblower has to meet certain conditions.

- If the disclosure is made externally to the council, it must be in the public interest and the person making the complaint ("the whistleblower") has a reasonable suspicion that the alleged malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.
- If the disclosure is made to a regulatory body such as OFSTED then as well as satisfying the conditions required for disclosure to the council, the whistleblower must also honestly and reasonably believe that the information they provide and any allegations contained in it are substantially true.
- For example, a colleague will be eligible for protection if:
  - they honestly think what they're reporting is true;
  - they think they're telling the right person;
  - they believe that their disclosure is in the public interest;
- If the disclosure is made to other external bodies then as well as satisfying the conditions required for to the council, in all circumstances of the case it must be reasonable for them to make the complaint. Further the whistleblower must:
  1. reasonably believe that they would be victimised if they raised the matter internally or to a regulatory body or,
  2. reasonably believe that evidence is likely to be concealed or destroyed or,
  3. have already raised the concern with the council and/or relevant regulatory body and,
  4. reasonably believe that the information they provide and any allegations contained therein are substantially true.

If the disclosure is made to other external bodies and is of an "exceptionally serious" nature – which in a local government setting could include, say, the alleged abuse of children or vulnerable adults in an authority's care or corruption then the whistleblower will not be required to:

- have raised the matter concerned internally first
- Believe that they will be subject to a detriment for raising the disclosure internally
- Believe that the evidence is likely to be concealed or destroyed.
- For further information see Organisational Whistle Blowing Policy to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children

## Whistleblowing Procedure

### Internal Whistle Blowing

A colleague who wants to raise a wrongdoing should in the first instance inform the Headteacher, or in the case of wrong doing by the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors;

### External Whistle Blowing

Following an internal whistle blowing a colleague can then report the matter externally by informing any one of the Contact Officers whose details are given in **Appendix A**.

In both internal and external whistle blowing, the initial contact can be by telephone or in writing, and if the latter should be in a sealed envelope addressed to the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or contact officer concerned and marked: 'PIDA – Strictly Private and Confidential'. **E-mail cannot be guaranteed as a secure medium and it is not recommended as a channel for reporting issues related to this policy.**

The Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Contact Officer who has received a disclosure will:

1. Acknowledge its receipt, in writing, within 5 working days;
2. Seek further information if required, which may include a personal interview, at which the colleague (whistleblower) can be accompanied by a representative of their trade union or professional association, or by a fellow employee;
3. On receipt of an internal disclosure from a member of staff, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will determine what further action, if any, is needed, which may comprise:
  - internal investigation
  - report to the Police
  - report to external audit
  - independent enquiry
  - any combination of the above
4. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will keep the individual informed regarding the progress and in all cases (subject to legal constraints) provide details of the outcome of any investigation.
5. In the case of an external report, when the precise nature of the alleged wrongdoing is established, the contact officer will refer the disclosure to the Monitoring Officer (Head of Law);
6. The Contact Officer will keep the individual informed regarding the progress and in all cases (subject to legal constraints) provide details of the outcome of any investigation.
7. On receipt of a disclosure from a Contact Officer the Monitoring Officer will determine what further action, if any, is needed, which may comprise:
  - internal investigation
  - report to the Police
  - report to external audit
  - independent enquiry
  - any combination of the above

The Monitoring Officer will also ensure that the Contact Officer is advised of progress and outcome.

If the colleague does not reasonably believe that appropriate action has been taken in relation to their concern, then they may raise it externally to the prescribed regulator or our external auditors. The charity, Public Concern at Work, can advise the colleague about raising the concern externally. This will include advising who the appropriate prescribed regulator is. The website for Public Concern at Work is <http://www.pcaw.co.uk/>

**External Auditor**  
**Price Waterhouse Coopers LLP**  
**Cornwall Court**  
**19 Cornwall Street**  
**Birmingham B3 2DT**  
**0121 265 5956**

**Updated September 2020**

**Joanne Jelves**  
**Headteacher**

**Document History**

<b>October 2008</b>	Adopted at Governing Body meeting 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2008
	Re-adopted at Governors Meeting 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2009
	Re-adopted at Governors Meeting 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2010
	Re-adopted at Governors Meeting 8 <sup>th</sup> November 2011
	Re-adopted at Personnel Committee Meeting 29 <sup>th</sup> November 2012
	Readopted at FG Meeting 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2013
	Presented for re-adoption at FG Meeting 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2014
	Reviewed and updated and presented for adoption at 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2015 Personnel Committee
	Reviewed and updated and presented for adoption autumn term 2016 Resources Committee
<b>August 2017</b>	Presented for adoption with no changes to autumn term 2017 Resources Committee 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
<b>August 2018</b>	Presented for adoption with no changes to autumn term 2018 Resources Committee on 25 <sup>th</sup> October 2018
<b>August 2019</b>	Reviewed and updated –Internal Whistle Blowing Procedure outlined in more detail Presented to Resources Committee 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2019
<b>August 2019</b>	Reviewed with no changes Presented to Resources Committee 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2020

***This policy is reviewed annually***

## **Whistle Blowing Procedure**

## **Appendix A**

## Appendix A

### Whistleblowing Procedure - Contact Officers (updated May 2018)

<b>STRATEGY, GOVERNANCE AND CHANGE</b>	
John Tradewell	01785 276102
Ann-Marle Davidson	01785 276131
Tracy Thorley	01785 276337

<b>FINANCE AND RESOURCES</b>	
Andy Burns	01785 276300
Dionne Lowndes	01785 854236
Lisa Andrews	01785 276402

<b>FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES</b>	
Helen Riley	01785 277200
Janene Cox	01785 278368
Mick Harrison	01785 278163
Richard Hancock	01785 854055
Kathy Maitland	01785 277095

<b>HEALTH AND CARE</b>	
Richard Harling	01785 278700
Andrew Sharp	01785 276841
Amanda Stringer	01785 895170
Jan Cartman-Frost	01785 276851
Karen Webb	01785 895553
Andrew Jepps	01785 278557
Helen Trousdale	01785 277008
Bev Jocelyn	01785 276816
Karen Bryson	01785 277064
Allan Reid	01785 278704
Jackie Small	01785 276697
Jo Sutherland	01785 277432

<b>ECONOMY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SKILLS</b>	
Darryl Evers	01785 278580
Anthony Hodge	01785 277204
Mary Anne Raftery	01785 276578
Pam Rushton	01785 277210