



Whistleblowing Policy

Policy and Procedure for Staff in Schools

St. Augustine's Federated Schools are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all of our community and promote a culture where children and adults feel confident about sharing any concerns which they may have about their own safety, the well-being of others and misuse of resources. In this way, we can create the safe and secure conditions that will allow our community to flourish and live 'Life in all its fullness'.

Ratified by the Governing Body	October 2025
Last review date	October 2023
Review date	October 2027

St Augustine's Federated Schools have consciously considered how this policy may affect people who share protected characteristics and have due regard for those whose identity is protected under the Equality Act 2010.



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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Federation at all times conducts its business with the highest standards of integrity and honesty. It expects all employees to maintain the same standards in everything they do. Staff members are, therefore, encouraged to report any wrongdoing by the Federation or its members of staff that falls short of these business principles and any wrongdoing by staff that may cause harm or danger to the welfare of the Federation's pupils.

The Federation 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.

- 1.2 The aims of this policy are:

- To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.
- To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.
- To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

- 1.3 This policy takes into account the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects employees who report wrongdoing within the workplace.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils and staff with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

2. What is whistleblowing?

Whistle-blowing covers concerns made that report wrongdoing that is "in the public interest". Examples of whistle-blowing include (but are not limited to):

- Criminal offences, such as fraud or corruption
- Pupils' or staff health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Breaches of financial management procedures
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest
- Damage to the environment

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above.

Not all concerns about the Federation or individual schools in the Federation, count as whistle-blowing. For example, personal staff grievances such as bullying or harassment do not usually count as whistle-blowing. If something affects a staff member as an individual, or relates to an individual employment contract, this is likely a grievance.

When staff have a concern they should consider whether it would be better to follow our staff grievance procedures.

Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) has:

- [Further guidance](#) on the difference between a whistle-blowing concern and a grievance that staff may find useful if unsure
- A free and confidential [advice line](#)

3. Procedure (for staff to raise a whistle-blowing concern)

3.1 When to raise a concern

Staff should consider the examples in section 2 when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or Federation procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

3.2 Who to report to

School-based staff should report their concern to the Head of Federation, Head of School or Line Manager. If the concern is about the Head of Federation, Head of School or Line Manager, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors.

3.3 How to raise the concern

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

4. Procedure for responding to a whistle-blowing concern

4.1 Investigating the concern

When a concern is received by the Head of Federation, Head of School or Line Manager – referred to from here as the ‘recipient’ – they will:

- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative
- Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information. If it becomes apparent the concern is not of a whistle-blowing nature, the recipient should handle the concern in line with the appropriate policy/procedure
- Reiterate, at this meeting, that they are protected from any unfair treatment or risk of dismissal as a result of raising the concern. If the concern is found to be malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action may be taken (see section 5 of this policy)
- Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there is:
 - The recipient should then arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the Chair of Governors, if appropriate. In some cases, they may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In others, they may need to report the matter to the police
 - The person who raised the concern should be informed of how the matter is being investigated and an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps



4.2 Outcome of the investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred. The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, the Head of Federation, Head of School, Governors and other staff, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

Whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

5. Malicious or vexatious allegations

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns when they believe there to potentially be an issue. If an allegation is made in good faith, but the investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the trust will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

6. Escalating concerns beyond the Federation

The Federation encourages staff to raise their concerns internally, in line with section 4 of this policy, but recognises that staff may feel the need to report concerns to an external body. A list of prescribed bodies to whom staff can raise concerns with is included [here](#).

The Protect advice line, linked to in section 2 of this policy, can also help staff when deciding whether to raise the concern to an external party.

7. Approval

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

These procedures have been agreed by the Governing Body, who will approve them whenever reviewed.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Grievance Policy & Procedure
- Parent & Carers Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Contact details



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