

St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School

Policy Statement

For

Whistle-Blowing

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| **This policy was adopted:** | **September 2023** |
| **By name:** | **Mr John Holmes** |
| **Position:** | **Chair of Governors** |
| **Signature:** | **J Holmes** |

**Our Mission Statement**

We aim to celebrate our partnership with the families we serve and the community we live in.

We aim to provide an education that enables each child to reach their full potential.

Our aim is the creation of an atmosphere where all are valued, gifts and talents are celebrated and the gospel values of love, respect and justice are at the heart of all we do.

**Our Vision**

Everyone feels a sense of belonging,

Has the opportunity to shine,

To enjoy their teaching and learning

But most of all – to dream big!

St Laurence’s Whistle Blowing Policy

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| **SECTION:**  **SUBJECT:** | **3** | Employment Practices  Confidential Reporting Procedure (Whistle Blowing) |  |  |
| **APPLICABLE**  **TO:**  **STATUS:**  **SOURCE:** |  | All school employees  Policy/Procedure  School Governing Body | |

1. **PREAMBLE**

1.1This school is committed to the highest possible Christian standards of openness, probity and accountability. In accordance with that commitment we expect employees and others with whom we deal, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the school’s work to come forward and voice those concerns.

* 1. This procedure document makes it clear that employees can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The procedure seeks to enable employees to raise serious concerns within the school rather than overlooking a concern or raising that concern out of the school.

1.3 The procedure applies to all employees and those contractors working for the school on school premises, for example, agency staff, builders and drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the school in their own premises, for example, care homes.

1.4 The procedure is in addition to the school’s complaints procedures and other relevant statutory reporting procedures applying to certain Departments. The procedure is also designed to sit along the schools’ Anti-fraud policy statement which outlines the school’s determination to combat fraud within the school and also to complement other procedures relating to irregularities or improper behaviour which occurs within the workplace.

### 2. AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE PROCEDURE

* 1. This procedure aims to:
* allow employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns about issues relating to school practices and procedures
* provide avenues for employees to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
* ensure that employees receive a response to concerns raised and that employees are aware of how to pursue those concerns further if necessary
* reassure employees that they will be protected from possible reprisal or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have made any such disclosure in good faith.

2.2 There are existing procedures in place to enable employees to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment. The Confidential Reporting Procedure is intended to cover major concerns that fall out the scope of the grievance procedures. Such concerns include:

* conduct which breaches the school’s standing orders and financial regulations
* conduct which is illegal
* disclosures relating to miscarriages of justice
* health and safety risks, include risks to the public as well as other employees
* damage to the environment
* sexual or physical abuse of clients, or
* other unethical conduct

2.3 Thus, any serious concerns that employees have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees or Members of the school or others acting on behalf of the school can be reported under the Confidential Reporting Procedure. This may be about something that:

* makes an employee feel uncomfortable in terms of generally acceptable standards, their own experience or the standards they believe the school subscribes to, or
* is contrary to the school’s Standing Orders and policies, or
* falls below accepted standards of practice, or
* amounts to improper conduct.

2.4 This procedure does not replace the school's complaints procedure, or any other school procedures.

**3. SAFEGUARDING**

3.1 The school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a

difficult one to make. Thus the school will fully support any employee who reports,

in good faith, any concerns that he/she has.

3.2 The school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation [including

informal pressures] of employees who report concerns and will take appropriate

action to protect employees who raise a concern in good faith.

3.3 Any investigation into allegations made under this procedure will not influence or be affected by any Disciplinary or Redundancy procedures in relation to employees who raise concerns under this procedure.

**4. CONFIDENTIALITY**

4.1 All concerns will be dealt with in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of an employee who raises a concern.

4.2 If however a concern leads to disciplinary action against an employee who is

accused of improper conduct, it may be necessary for any employee[s] who raised

the concern to give evidence as a witness in disciplinary proceedings, or to provide

information to an out body i.e., the Police.

**5. ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS**

5.1 Concerns expressed anonymously may be conveyed at the discretion of the

school. However employees are encouraged to put their name to any concerns

raised to aid investigation of those concerns.

5.2 In exercising discretion in relation to anonymous allegations the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised

- the credibility of the allegation; and

- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

**6. UNTRUE ALLEGATIONS**

If an employee makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not substantiated by the investigation, no action will be taken against that employee. If, however, an employee makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against that employee.

**7. THE PROCEDURE FOR RAISING CONCERNS**

7.1 As a first step, employees should normally raise concerns in writing with

their immediate Line Manager. This depends, however, on the seriousness and

sensitivity of the issues involved and who is involved. If employees feel unable to

raise concerns with their own Line Manager the concern should be addressed to

their Chief Officer. If the employee feels unable to do this, concerns should be

expressed to the Governing Body, c/o Chair of Governors.

7.2 Advice/guidance on how to pursue matters of concern may be obtained from

the Chair of Governors or Head Teacher.

7.3 Employees who wish to make a written report are encouraged to use the following format:

* the background and the nature of the concern [giving relevant dates];
* the reason why he/she is particularly concerned about the situation.

7.4 Although employees are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an

allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the Confidential Reporting Panel that

there are reasonable grounds for concern.

7.5 Employees may wish to discuss concerns with a colleague and may find it easier

to raise the matter if there are two [or more] people who have had the same or

similar experience or concerns.

7.6 In summary therefore, concerns can be reported to the employees’ line

manager, Head Teacher, or the Governing Body of the school who will deal with the

complaint in accordance with section 8 below.

**8. HOW THE SCHOOL WILL RESPOND**

8.1 The school will respond to all concerns raised except those anonymous

allegations where discretion is exercised not to do so as outlined in Paragraph 5.2

of this procedure.

8.2 If a concern is raised, initial enquiries will be made by the person(s) receiving the complaint, to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. The overriding principle is to act in the public interest.

8.3 Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures [for example, child protection, discrimination, or disciplinary issues] will normally be referred to the appropriate person(s) for conration under those procedures. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted. If it is decided that an investigation is required, this may be undertaken using the school’s existing procedures and/or by involving the police and/or district audit.

8.4 Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the employee will be contacted by the appropriate officer:

* to acknowledge that the concern has been received
* to indicate how the school proposes to deals with the matter
* supplying information on staff support mechanisms, and
* stating whether further investigation will take place and if not, why not.

8.5 The level of contact between the persons investigating the concern and the

employee[s] who raised the initial concern will depend on the nature of the concern,

the potential difficulties involved and the complexity of the information provided.

If necessary, further information will be sought from the employee[s] who raised

the initial concerns.

8.6 Where any meeting is arranged, if he/she so wishes, the employee[s] who

raised the initial concerns can be accompanied by a union or professional association

representative or a friend.

8.7 This procedure seeks to minimise any problems which may arise as a result

of raising a concern. For instance, if required to give evidence in criminal or

disciplinary proceedings, the employee will be given advice and guidance on the

procedures.

8.8 The school accepts that employees need to be assured that the matter has

been properly addressed. Subject to legal constraints, any employees who raise

initial concerns will be informed of the outcome of any investigation

**9. THE RESPONSIBLE BODY**

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this

procedure, and will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcome of any

investigation.

**10. HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER**

10.1 This procedure is intended to provide an avenue within the school to raise

concerns. If employees are dissatisfied and feel it is right to take the matter out

of the school, they have the right to do so. This should normally be done after the

conclusion of the school’s investigation into the employee[s] concerns.

This procedure if properly applied should prevent the need for such action by employee[s].

* 1. If concerns are raised out the school by employees, they must endeavour to

protect the confidentiality of matters relating to the school's business and its employees.

* 1. The school accepts that there may be circumstances where employees can properly report matters to out bodies e.g. The Police, The Health and Safety Executive etc. Provided that the employee has acted honestly and reasonably he/she will be protected from any Disciplinary Action arising from such disclosures. However, this procedure has been devised to minimise the need for employees to report matters to out bodies or agencies. Employees must therefore be able to justify external disclosure.

**REVIEW OF POLICY**

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and every three years by the Governing Body. If changes are made to the policy, the Governing Body will ratify amendments.

This policy was reviewed:

Signed: J Holmes

Designation: Chair of Governors

Date: 14th September 2023

**CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING PROCEDURE**

##### COMPLAINANT

COMPC

RESOLVED BY AGREEMENT

OR NO FURTHER ACTION

The outcome of any investigation would be reported as appropriate to the Schools Governing Body

APPROPRIATE\* PROCEDURES

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

GOVERNING BODY

HEAD TEACHER/LINE MANAGER

OR

INITIAL ENQUIRIES INTO COMPLAINT OR CONCERN

|  |
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| \*Appropriate Procedures:  HR Policies  Police  Financial Irregularities  District Audit |

Governing Body:

Chair of Governors

Governing Body

Head Teacher

School Business Manager