



Whistle Blowing Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Staff and Governors of Antrobus St Mark's and Great Budworth Primary Schools seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. In the event that members of school staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, we have established the following Whistle Blowing Policy which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Throughout this policy, the term *whistle blower* denotes the person raising the concern or making the complaint. It is not meant in a pejorative sense and is entirely consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies published in May 1996.

ASM and GB schools are committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. ASM and GB schools recognise that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the school.

ASM and GB schools are 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.

The provisions of this policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety and not matters of more general grievance which would be dealt with under the federated schools' grievance procedures.

When might the Whistle Blowing Policy apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which ASM and GB schools considers should be dealt with under this policy includes:

- manipulation of accounting records and finances
- inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- decision-making for personal gain
- any criminal activity
- abuse of position
- fraud and deceit

- serious breaches of school procedures which may advantage a particular party

What action should the whistle blower take?

ASM and GB schools encourage the *whistle blower* to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow the school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and explain the behaviour or activity.

ASM and GB schools have designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the *whistle blower* is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

NAME & POSITION	CONTACT DETAILS
Miss Rhian Perry Headteacher	Antrobus St Mark's School and Great Budworth Primary School 01606 668340 (ASM) and 01606 663690 (GB)
Mrs Lisa Rigby Chair of Governors	07717776514 lrigby@antrobus.cheshire.sch.uk

The *whistle blower* may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in written form marked private and confidential and addressed to one of the above-named individuals. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible. In addition, information and advice can be obtained from the charity Public Concern at Work. This charity offers free legal advice in certain circumstances to people concerned about serious malpractice at work. Their literature states that matters are handled in strict confidence and without obligation. Contact details for the charity are as follows: -

Public Concern a Work

3rd Floor, Bank Chambers
6 - 10 Borough High Street
London SE1 9QQ

Telephone

Whistleblowing Advice Line: 020 7404 6609

General enquiries: 020 3117 2520

How will the matter be progressed?

The individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation (the investigating officer(s)) will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of school staff, the school's external auditors, legal or personnel advisors, the police, the Department for Education and Employment, the Funding Agency for Schools.

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigating officer(s), possibly in conjunction with the governing body, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third-party referral such as the police.

The *whistle blower* will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the Governing Body and the Funding Agency for Schools.

If the *whistle blower* is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the investigating officer(s), the Governing Body and/or directed to the Funding Agency for Schools.

Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible ASM and GB schools seek to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the *whistle blower* and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals. ASM and GB schools will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the *whistle blower* or attempt to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

Raising unfounded malicious concerns

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances.

Conclusion

Existing good practice within ASM and GB schools in terms of its systems of internal control both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the school operates ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur. This Whistle Blowing Policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the school. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.

Signed (Head Teacher)

Signed (Chair of Governors)

Date.....22 October 2021.....

Date of next review.....