



# ST EDMUND'S SCHOOL CANTERBURY

## Whistleblowing Policy

**“All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's or college's safeguarding regime, and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.”**

*(Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020, p16)*

The governing body of St Edmund's School Canterbury aims to be a good employer and is committed to high standards of probity and good practice in employer/employee relations. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees from any victimisation by employers if they reveal any wrong-doing in the workplace, and fear that they might be victimised in so doing. St Edmund's seeks to ensure that there is a culture of safety and of raising concerns, including about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime. There will be transparency and accountability in relation to how concerns are received and handled.

This policy is designed to ensure that employees can follow simple procedures which value staff and encourage reflective practice, and to reassure everyone in the school that their concerns will be taken seriously.

### Responsibilities

The Head has overall responsibility for the procedures and for ensuring that:

- the appropriate procedures are in place
- they are implemented
- any concerns and any action taken are reported to the governing body
- all staff are aware of their rights and duties under the Act through regular staff training and support

### Rights

Any St Edmund's employee is entitled, without any fear of reprisal, to disclose any action which he or she reasonably considers:

- potentially or actually unlawful
- involves a miscarriage of justice
- compromises an individual's health and safety
- might cause environmental damage
- contravenes any DfE or school policy
- might be considered improper
- falls below the normal standards of conduct in the school.

This right is guaranteed by the governing body, so long as the individual has acted in good faith.

### **Duties**

The member of staff must:

- act in good faith when making such a disclosure
- not commit a criminal offence in so doing
- not disclose such confidential information to any person outside the school
- not expect any personal gain from making the revelation.

### **Complaints Procedures**

Members of staff should consider whether the school's grievance or complaints procedure should be followed in the first instance. Any disclosure of a lack of probity during these procedures is protected by whistleblowing legislation and the governing body's guarantee.

The Complaints Policy can be found here:

<https://www.stedmunds.org.uk/about-us/policies-inspection-reports/>

### **Confidential Reporting**

In addition, any member of staff who has a reasonable concern about the probity of any action taken in the school can also choose to follow the confidential reporting route. If, however, the information would lead to a criminal investigation, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

The confidential reporting route is as follows:

In the first instance, the member of staff should take the matter up in confidence with the Head (Head of the Junior School, Head of Pre-Prep or Bursar as appropriate), or, if the concern is about any action taken by the Head, with the Chairman of Governors, via the Clerk to the Governing Body (the Bursar).

The Head (Head of the Junior School, Head of Pre-Prep or Bursar), or Chairman of Governors, must attempt to resolve the matter with the member of staff within a reasonable time and, in any case, must report progress to the member of staff, under normal circumstances, within ten days of the making of the complaint.

If the member of staff is not satisfied with the Head's (Head of the Junior School's, Head of Pre-Prep's or Bursar's) or Chairman's response to the complaint, or the time being taken to resolve it, the member of staff may take the matter up formally and promptly with the Chairman of Governors. The Chairman may give the member of staff the opportunity to approach the Vice-Chairman in the first instance if the Chairman is already involved. The Chairman (Vice-Chairman) will appoint two Governors plus one external person to consider the formal complaint, and to attempt a resolution, including, where necessary and appropriate, making provision for mediation and dispute resolution, within ten working days, under normal circumstances, of receiving the complaint. The decision of this panel is final and binding.

### **Malicious Accusations**

False, malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

### **Victimisation**

At all times the governing body guarantees that the member of staff will be protected from any reprisals or victimisation. However, any member of staff taking such a course must not make malicious or vexatious allegations which are shown to be untrue. In such circumstances, the member of staff's conduct could lead to disciplinary action.

### **External Contacts**

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the school, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- general guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: *Advice on Whistleblowing*:  
<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>
- the NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college:  
  
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>
- Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).
- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found here  
<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Head will report all complaints of this nature to the next governing body meeting, without revealing the name of the complainant or any unnecessary details. The Head will report on the nature of any complaint, the action taken, and the resolution of it.

The governing body will review the working of the procedures annually.

### **FURTHER GUIDANCE**

The school has made reference to the non-statutory DfE advice '*Working together to safeguard children*' (July 2018) in creating this policy and also to '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*' (KCSIE) (September 2020)

Both can be found here:

<https://www.stedmunds.org.uk/about-us/policies-inspection-reports/>

V1 February 2018

V2 September 2018

V3 September 2019

V4 September 2020

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