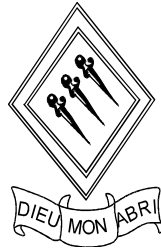


# ST BERNARD'S HIGH SCHOOL



## WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Created: September 2009

Reviewed: January 2010

April 2016

**Approved by Full Governing Body: July 2016**

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Chair of Governors

Next Review due: April 2019

## **Our Mission Statement**

*St Bernard's is a school community that aims to live by Jesus' commandment, 'Love one another as I have loved you.'*

*We are a Catholic learning community committed to the ongoing development of the entire potential of every person, achieved through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.*

*We care for each other as individuals of equal worth, regardless of status, sex, race or religion and thus actively seek to promote safeguarding, justice and fairness.*

*We provide an atmosphere in which all can grow in our Faith, and encourage this faith by a lively relevant liturgy.*

*We work with parents, parishes, local communities and industry to prepare our students for the opportunities of adulthood.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

From time to time staff may have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are about unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, misconduct, bad practice, Health and Safety issues or dangers to the students, parents and others, or to the environment, it can be difficult to know what to do. Schools have a statutory requirement to put a whistleblowing policy in place.

You may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to yourself, perhaps feeling it's none of your business or that it's only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, school leaders, governors or to the school. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in a wrong way and are not sure what to do next.

This policy is to enable staff to raise their concerns about any such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. It is preferable that staff raise the matter when it is just a concern rather than wait for proof.

If something is troubling you that you think the Senior Leadership Team should know about or look into, please use this policy. If, however, you are aggrieved about your personal position, or have a complaint that is already covered by a core policy, please use the usual procedures. This Whistleblowing Policy is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or of the organisation itself are at risk.

### **If in doubt – raise it!**

If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Provided you are acting in good faith, it does not matter if you are mistaken. Of course we do not extend this assurance to someone who maliciously raises a matter they know is untrue.

We will not tolerate the harassment or victimization of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, we recognize that you may nonetheless want to raise a concern in confidence under this policy. If you ask us to protect your identity by keeping your confidence, we will not disclose it without your consent. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identity (for instance because your identity is needed in court), we will discuss with you whether and how we can proceed.

Remember that if you do not tell us who you are and raise your concern anonymously, it will be much more difficult for us to look into the matter or to protect your position or to give you feedback. Accordingly, while we will consider anonymous reports, this policy is not well suited to concerns raised in this way.

If you do raise a concern, we will maintain your confidence and will not disclose your identity without your prior consent. By doing so, we can protect your position, gain further information if required and give you feedback on what has happened.

### **How the school will deal with the matter**

Once you have told us of your concern, we will look into it to assess what action should be taken. This may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. We will tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact them and whether your further assistance may be needed. If you request it, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it.

When you raise the concern you may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you do have any personal interest in the matter, we do ask that you tell us at the outset. If your concern falls more properly within the Grievance Procedure or other School Procedure we will tell you.

While the purpose of this policy is to enable us to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, we will give you as much feedback as we properly can. If requested, we will confirm our response to you in writing. Please note, however, that we may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this would infringe duty of confidence owed by us to someone else.

### **HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN INTERNALLY**

If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your immediate line manager. This may be done orally or in writing.

If you feel unable to raise the matter with your line manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with:

#### **The Head Teacher or The Chair of Governors**

Please say if you want to raise the matter in confidence so that they can make appropriate arrangements.

### **INDEPENDENT ADVICE**

If you are unsure whether to use this policy or you want independent advice at any stage, you may contact:

- The independent charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 or [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk) Their lawyers can give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work.

### **EXTERNAL CONTACTS**

While we hope this policy gives you the reassurance you need to raise such matters internally, we would rather you raised a matter with the appropriate regulator than not at all. Provided you are acting in good faith and you have evidence to back up your concern, you can also contact:

**Health and Safety Executive** – health and safety risks

**Environment Agency** – environment issues

**HM Revenue & Customs** – financial irregularities

**Audit Commission** – public sector finance

**Data Protection Registrar** – data protection issues

**The Office of the Information Commissioner** – freedom of information

**IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED**

If you are unhappy with the school's response, remember you can go to the other levels and bodies detailed in this Policy.

While we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, we will try to handle the matter fairly and properly. By using this policy, you will help us to achieve this.