



SEND CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Agreed: Spring 2026

Review Spring 2027

Annual

Commented [YM1]: If annual, why is review date 2 years?

1. Introduction and ethos

At Send CofE Primary School, our Christian vision and values underpin everything we do. We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur. This policy seeks to ensure that any employee or worker at the school can raise concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination, or disadvantage.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels of the organisation, including:

1. Employees (teachers, support staff, administration staff).
2. Casual and agency workers.
3. Volunteers and governors.

Note: This policy is for "**whistleblowing**" (disclosures in the public interest). It does not apply to personal grievances concerning an individual's terms of employment (e.g., pay or workload), which are covered by the school's *Grievance policy*.

3. What is Whistleblowing?

"Whistleblowing" is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. The law protects staff who report the following "qualifying disclosures":

- **Criminal activity** (e.g., fraud, theft, bribery).
- **Failure to comply with any legal obligation** (e.g., failure to manage public funds correctly).
- **Miscarriages of justice.**
- **Danger to health and safety.**
- **Damage to the environment.**
- **Safeguarding concerns** (risks to the welfare of children).
- **The deliberate concealment** of any of the above matters.

4. Safeguards for staff

- **Protection** - This policy refers to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. No member of staff will suffer any detriment (such as dismissal, disciplinary action, or threats) for raising a genuine concern.
- **Confidentiality** - We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it becomes necessary to disclose your identity (e.g., for police investigation), we will discuss this with you first.
- **Anonymous allegations** - We do not encourage anonymous allegations. Concerns expressed anonymously are much harder to investigate. However, the headteacher or chair of governors (if raising a concern about the headteacher) will consider them at their discretion, taking into account:
 - The seriousness of the issues raised.
 - The credibility of the concern.
 - The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

5. Procedure: how to raise a concern

Step 1: Internal reporting

In the first instance, you should raise your concern with your immediate line manager or the headteacher. This can be done verbally or in writing.

Headteacher: Mrs Marianne McDonnell

Email: head@sendcofe.co.uk

Step 2: If the concern is about the headteacher

If the concern involves the headteacher, or if you feel unable to raise it with them, you should report it to the **chair of governors**.

Chair of governors: Mrs Yvonne McLeod

Email: chair@sendcofe.co.uk

Step 3: Safeguarding concerns (LADO and diocese)

If the whistleblowing concern specifically relates to a **safeguarding issue** regarding a member of staff or volunteer, you must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Surrey LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer):

- **Tel:** 0300 123 1650 (Option 3)
- **Email:** LADO@surreycc.gov.uk

Diocese of Guildford safeguarding team:

- **Tel:** 01483 790379 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)
- **Email:** safeguarding@cofeguildford.org.uk

6. External reporting services for Surrey schools

As a maintained school in Surrey, staff have access to specific external confidential reporting lines if they feel unable to raise the issue internally or with the chair of governors.

Confidential whistleblowing hotlines:

- **Expolink:** 0800 374 199
- **Navex Global:** 0800 069 8180

These services provide an independent, confidential route to report concerns about fraud, financial irregularity, or serious wrongdoing.

7. How the school will respond

1. **Acknowledgement:** The person you contacted will acknowledge your concern (usually within 5–10 working days).
2. **Initial enquiry:** An initial assessment will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.
3. **Investigation:** The matter may be investigated by the headteacher, a governor, or an external investigator appointed by Surrey County Council.
4. **Feedback:** Subject to legal constraints, you will be informed of the outcome of any investigation.

8. Prescribed bodies

If you feel that it is right to take the matter outside the school and the local authority, the following represent "prescribed bodies" you can contact legally:

| Concern type | External body |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Safeguarding / Child Protection | NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline 0800 028 0285 |
| Education Standards | Ofsted whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk |
| Health & Safety | Health and Safety Executive (HSE) |
| Independent Advice | Protect (Charity) 020 3117 2520 (Free legal advice) |