Yew Tree Primary School

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee with oversight for this Policy</th>
<th>Safeguarding</th>
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<td>Policy last reviewed by the Committee</td>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
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<td>Policy ratified and adopted by Full Governing Body</td>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review frequency</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy due for review</td>
<td>Spring 2021</td>
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Introduction

1. The staff and governors of Yew Tree Primary School 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, Yew Tree Primary School has established the following whistleblowing policy, or code of practice, 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.

2. Whilst the policy primarily covers employees (including school teaching and non-teaching staff) and people working for or on behalf of SMBC, the school would also like to encourage volunteers and service users who have a concern to raise it in the knowledge that it will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

3. This policy is intended to encourage and assist those individuals above, who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety, to raise their concerns within the school in the first instance rather than overlooking a problem or raising concerns outside of the organisation.

4. Yew Tree Primary School is committed to addressing fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. Yew Tree Primary School recognises 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.

5. Throughout this policy, the term whistleblower 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.

6. Yew Tree Primary School is 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.
7. The type of activity or behaviour which Yew Tree Primary School considers should be dealt with under this policy includes:

- A criminal offence.
- An illegal or dishonest practice.
- Disclosures relating to miscarriages of justice.
- Unauthorised uses of public funds.
- Possible fraud, corruption or malpractice.
- Breaches of Council policies or procedures.
- Breaches of agreed LA or governing body procedures.
- Unsafe or unhealthy working practices that put the safety of employees and/or visitors at risk.
- Failure to comply with legal obligations.
- Risks to the environment.
- Other unethical conduct by officers and members.
- The deliberate concealing of information relating to any of the above matters.
- Allegations of abuse to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Failure to report/investigate abuse.

8. Yew Tree Primary School encourages the whistleblower to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and give an explanation for the behaviour or activity.

9. Yew Tree Primary School has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the whistleblower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Headteacher - Rachael Russell</td>
<td>School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair of Governors - George Wood</td>
<td>School</td>
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10. The whistleblower 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.
11. Alternatively if the whistleblower considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise within the internal environment of the school, the matter should be directed in the first instance to the Audit Committee who has overall responsibility for monitoring the Local Authority’s whistleblowing procedures.

12. The LA has its own procedures for dealing with such matters and will ensure every effort to respect the confidentiality of the whistleblower.

13. This policy seeks to encourage and assist individuals to disclose information through an appropriate channel. Ideally we would like to think that employees will raise concerns with their manager in the first instance, however where they feel that this is not appropriate or would prefer to speak to someone independent, they can contact the Head of Internal Audit Services or another member of the team on 0121 704 6067, alternatively on 0800 028 8535 or antifraud@solihull.gov.uk.

Internal Audit Services
Strategic Services
P O Box 9
Council House
Solihull
West Midlands
B91 9QR

Where the employee feels that he/she would like to discuss the issue before raising it formally he/she can contact Public Concern at Work on 0121 704 6609, who will reassure the individual and advise on the best way to raise the concern.

Or, where applicable, the individual may want to raise the matter with a Trade Union representative.

14. 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 further information, advice or assistance.
The following matters may need to be considered as part of the investigation:

- The most appropriate method of investigation and the skills needed.
- The evidence that is needed to substantiate the concern.
- Whether the matter needs to be referred to the Police.
- What involvement External Auditors should have.
- Whether an independent inquiry is appropriate.

15. 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 that corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third party referral such as the police.

16. The whistleblower 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 LA.

17. If the whistleblower 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 LA.

18. Wherever possible Yew Tree Primary School seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistleblower and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals. Yew Tree Primary School will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the whistleblower or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

19. 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 or penalty appropriate to the circumstances.
20. Existing good practice with Yew Tree Primary School 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 “whistleblowing” policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially 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.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the SMBC Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosure) policy.