



  
**Princecroft**  
**PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Incorporating The Hive Nursery

# Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Review date	February 2024
Date of next policy review	February 2026

*This policy is in line with the Single Equality Policy*

**Princecroft Primary School  
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## Policy Statement

1. Wiltshire Council and our school are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. This Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure supports this commitment.
2. Relevant trade unions and professional organisations have been consulted about this policy and procedure, and it has their support.

## Scope

3. It gives employees and others with genuine concerns about malpractice or wrongdoing in the school or council, a way to voice those concerns without fear of victimisation.
4. Often it is those closest to an organisation who realise that there is something wrong. Sometimes people are reluctant to act upon their concerns because they think that they are being disloyal, or because they are afraid that they might be victimised if they speak up.
5. There are existing procedures in place (e.g. Grievance, and Dignity at Work Policies) which make provision for employees to lodge a concern relating to their own employment. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to complement those procedures by covering concerns that appear to fall outside their scope. This concern may be about something that is:
  - Unlawful, including financial or fraudulent malpractice such as embezzlement, bribery, corruption, dishonesty, etc
  - Against establishment standards of practice
  - Improper conduct.
6. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures, e.g. child protection or financial irregularities will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
7. The Local Authority will not accept liability for any actions, claims, costs or expenses arising out of a school's decision not to follow this policy where it is found that the school's Governing Body has been negligent or has acted in an unfair or discriminatory manner.

## Definitions

8. A 'nominated governor' is the governor identified by the governing body as the first point of contact for whistleblowing queries. The nominated governor could be the Chair of Governors or another governor (but not a staff governor). At Princecroft School the nominated governor is **Mrs Sue Allen**

## Aims

9. The purpose of this policy is to provide the help and support needed to speak up and be confident that it can be done so safely. The School will take all concerns seriously and ensure that they are dealt with promptly and fairly.

## How to raise a concern

School :	<b>Princecroft Primary School</b>
Named internal contact :	<b>Mrs Gemma Pierson (Head Teacher)</b>
Preferred external contact:	<b>Mrs Sue Allen (nominated governor)</b>

10. Initial concerns should be raised with the Head Teacher or nominated governor. If the employee believes that this governor is implicated then the employee should approach the Chair of Governors.
11. Within 48 hours the nominated governor will make contact to arrange a meeting to discuss the concerns. Before the meeting, it would be helpful to have written down what the problem is considered to be, giving names, dates and places where possible. If there are any other documents that it is thought might be helpful, please try to bring them to the meeting. It is advisable to take a friend, colleague or school professional association / union representative to the meeting with the governor.
12. It is encouraged for a concern to be raised in person, or through a professional association / union representative on their behalf, because concerns that are expressed anonymously are difficult to investigate. However, the school will exercise its discretion in deciding whether to investigate an anonymous allegation. The factors taken into account will include:
  - the seriousness of the issues raised;
  - the credibility of the allegation; and
  - the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation from attributable sources.

## **How the School will respond**

13. After the initial meeting, the nominated governor will arrange for discreet initial enquiries to be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so, what form it should take.
14. The nominated governor will write a letter within 10 days of the initial meeting to:
  - acknowledge that the concern has been received
  - outline the understanding of what the issues are; and
  - indicate how the school proposes to deal with the matter.
15. If the nominated governor decides that it is appropriate for an investigation to be carried out, this will either be done by them, or by a governor who is asked to investigate – the investigating officer. However, it may sometimes be necessary for a concern to be referred to the police, an external auditor, or for it to be the subject of an independent enquiry. In addition, where it is established that the complaint involves issues of bullying or unlawful discrimination, it will be necessary to involve the school's Human Resources provider.
16. If an investigation is carried out, the person with the concern will always be informed of the final outcome. It might not be possible to give full details of the outcome if it contains personal details of a third party, because the School has a duty to protect personal information under the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016.

## **How will the School treat whistleblowers?**

17. If an allegation is made in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken. If malicious allegations are made knowingly, disciplinary action may be taken.
18. Disciplinary action will be taken against any member of staff who tries to stop another employee from raising a concern or who is responsible for any act of recrimination or victimisation against an employee who raises a concern.
19. Where an employee may have been party themselves to an act of possible gross misconduct on which they are now 'blowing the whistle' this could be considered in mitigation. They are not, however, exempt from disciplinary action.

20. Disciplinary action may be taken against employees if they contact the media with concerns about conduct at work without first following the steps set out in this policy.
21. The Governing Body will make every effort to protect an employee's identity when s/he raises a concern and does not want her/his name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated however, that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by the employee may be required as part of the evidence.
22. If a concern is raised, the opportunity will be given to feed back any issues or problems that may have been experienced as a result. The purpose of this is to ensure that employees who have raised concerns in good faith do not suffer as a result.

### **Queries**

23. If there are any queries about this policy, please contact the Headteacher and / or Chair of Governors.
24. This policy will be reviewed in two years or earlier if there is a requirement.