Confidential Reporting Policy
“Whistleblowing”

Westmorland Primary School

2026

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1. Introduction

The rights & responsibilities outlined within the corporate procedure are inherent within this procedure; this document outlines particular responsibilities for school based employees.

2. Statement

This Governing Body is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. Any school governor who has serious concerns about the school is expected to come forward and voice those concerns. They will be able to do so in confidence and without fear of reprisal

3. Legislation

UK Public Disclosure Act 1998 came into force on 2nd July 1999. The Act promotes the public interest

4. Scope

This policy is additional to the existing mechanisms that exist for raising particular issues e.g. the grievance procedure exists for issues around employment, parental complaints are managed through the Governor Complaints procedure & Schools Management Team, child protection issues should be directed in the first instance to the Principal Education Welfare Officer

This procedure covers major concerns as illustrated below:

- Conduct which is an offence or breach of the law
- Disclosures relating to miscarriage of justice
- Health & safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Damage to the environment
- Unauthorised use of public funds
- Unethical conduct
- Breach of other legal obligation
- Concealment of any of the above

Thus any serious concerns you have about the operation of the school or conduct of school staff or members of the Governing Body can be reported under this policy.

An employee who makes such a disclosure has the right not to be dismissed or subjected to victimisation, because he or she has made the disclosure.

Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.

An instruction to cover up wrong doing is itself a disciplinary offence.

5. How to raise a concern

As a first step you should normally raise concerns with your immediate manager or Headteacher. However depending on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue it may be appropriate to raise the issue with the Chair of Governors. In extreme cases you should approach the Director for Education (or an appropriate representative).

Concerns are best raised in writing. Staff are encouraged to use the following format:

- The background and history of the concern
- The reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation

If you are not able to put your concern in writing you should meet with the appropriate person as detailed above

You are encouraged to put your name to your allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the governing body in line with the corporate guidelines.

You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague or trade union representative, you may wish to bring a representative along to any meetings you may have.

The School recognises that reporting a concern can be difficult. If what you are saying is true you should have nothing to fear. If you raise a concern in good faith you will have nothing to fear.

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. However you need to be aware that you may need to come forward as a witness.

6. Process agreement for outside agencies

If appropriate have an honest conversation with the person concerned.

If the concern is about a member of staff at any level, apart from the Headteacher, seek advice/inform the Headteacher. Inform the line manager that you have passed this information on, agency line manager may choose to contact school in order to discuss further.

If the concern is about the Headteacher, seek advice from the LADO or write your concern to the chair of Governors and hand it in at the office marked Private and Confidential.

If the concern has been raised to you by a parent and is a school-based issue, check the parent has discussed with the Headteacher/Deputy, outside agencies are encouraged to phone the Headteacher to verify. If the parent has not contacted the Headteacher parents must be encouraged to do so. Agencies should not refer school-based issues further without discussing with the Headteacher.

If the concern is about the Headteacher, seek advice from the team leader and refer to the LADO if the manager deems appropriate.

It is inappropriate for services to bypass school-based systems/protocols or the Headteacher in most cases and damages working relationships.

Not following school-based protocols also could be detrimental to any investigation that might need to be undertaken and breeches the dignity at work policy.

7. How the school will respond

The School will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.

Where appropriate the matter raised may:

- Be investigated within school
- Be referred to the appropriate Service within the Council for further investigation
- Be referred to the external auditor
- Be referred to the police
- Form the subject of an independent enquiry

If the matter is dealt with in school the appropriate member of the school management team or Governing Body will respond to the

concern. If the matter is referred to the Council the corporate process will be followed.

If you are not satisfied with any action taken or you feel it is right to take the matter outside the Council, the following are possible contact points:

- your local councillor
- the external auditor
- your solicitor
- your trade union
- your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- a relevant voluntary organisation (e.g. Public Concern at Work 0171 404 6609)
- the police
- the Audit Commission via a special telephone hotline 0171 630 1019

If you do take the matter outside the Council, you should ensure that you do not disclose confidential information. Check with the contact point about that