



Saint Pierre School,
16 Leigh Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1LE

Staff Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Owner (Position)	Last Updated By (Name)	Date of Last Review	Date Next Review Due
Assistant Head, DSL, Head of EYFS	Gemma Hoffman	30 th August 2024	30 th June 2026
Read in Conjunction with: Safeguarding Policy Staff Handbook Staff Code of Conduct			

Whistleblowing

At Saint Pierre, all adults have a responsibility to report any concerns about poor or unsafe practice, including in relation to the care and protection of a pupil or pupils. If a member of staff believes that best practice in this area is not being adhered to or that practice may put a pupil or pupils at risk, they should:

Report any concern to the Headteacher/proprietor (Peter Lane)

If the concern relates to the Headteacher or Proprietor (Peter Lane, Kurt Davies)

Report the concern to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) Southend (Alison Francis)

Concerns raised under this Whistleblowing Policy are distinct from concerns or allegations about an adult's suitability to work with or have access to children.

No member of Saint Pierre staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine concern about unsafe practice, provided that they do so in good faith and follow the whistleblowing procedures.

1. Introduction

Saint Pierre School takes malpractice seriously and encourages people to speak out if they are aware of any actual or potential malpractice within the organisation. The school is committed to creating an open culture, where concerns can be raised without fear of reprisals.

1.2, Our whistleblowing policy exists to help individuals raise concerns over any wrongdoing within the school relating to unlawful conduct, safeguarding financial malpractice, or dangers to the public or the environment. It does not apply where employees are aggrieved about their own personal position — in such instances the grievance procedure applies (See staff handbook). The Whistleblowing Policy is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or of the organisation itself are at risk.

1.3, The policy is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within the school rather than overlook a problem. The policy also outlines how individuals may properly raise concerns.

1.4, The policy supports the Council's Fraud and Corruption policy and complements other specific investigation procedures developed to support vulnerable groups i.e. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection.

1.5, If you have a concern, this table helps identify who you should consider contacting:

Report any concern to the Headteacher (Peter Lane- peter.lane@saintpiereschool.co.uk)

If the concern relates to the Headteacher/ proprietor

Report the concern to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) Alison Francis – 01702

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Or to the Independent Schools Association

1.6, All employees at Saint Pierre School may use this policy. This includes permanent and temporary employees. It also covers agency workers and employees seconded to a third party.

1.7, This Policy applies to Teachers, Nursery Practitioners, Teaching Assistants, along with all other School employees including support staff eg kitchen staff etc.

2. Policy statement

2.1, Saint Pierre School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and will take action to address improper practices. As part of this commitment, at Saint Pierre school we are determined to follow best practice on whistleblowing and aim to:

- Provide opportunities for individuals to raise concerns outside of their line management structure.
- Not allow any individuals who come forward with concerns raised in good faith to be discriminated against or victimised.
- Ensure all concerns are treated in confidence and make every effort not to reveal the identity of the whistle-blower. (The school cannot give a complete assurance that an individual's identity would not be revealed).
- Investigate all concerns, ensure individuals receive a response to their concerns, and take all possible action against wrongdoers.
- Take action against anyone found to have made a false allegation maliciously.

3. When does the whistleblowing policy apply?

3.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 sets out the categories where the statutory whistleblowing protection applies (See below):

- A criminal offence.
- Failure to comply with a statutory or legal duty.

- Improper unauthorised use of funds.
- A miscarriage of justice.
- Sexual or physical abuse of any employee or service recipient.
- Discrimination of an employee or service recipient on the grounds of sex, age, race, disability, religion, belief, or sexual orientation.
- Endangering of an individual's health and safety.
- damage to the environment.
- deliberate concealment of any of the above.

3.2, In addition, the Southend Council/ Saint Pierre School will provide similar protection to any employee "blowing the whistle" on any issue deemed to be a breach of the code of conduct.

3.3, The overriding concern should be, that it would be in the public interest for malpractice to be corrected and, if appropriate, sanctions applied.

3.4, The policy is subject to any relevant legislation and specifically will operate within the requirements of the GDPR 2018.

4. How to raise a concern

4.1, The Public Interest Disclosure Act encourages individuals to raise their initial concern with their employer. At Saint Pierre School, the key contacts to raise whistleblowing concerns with are shown in section 1.5 of this document.

4.2, Whilst an individual can raise concerns verbally, it is often better to put them in writing, but any method of communication is acceptable. The information required contains the background and history of the concern including names, dates, and places where possible, and the reason for the particular concern. To allow the points raised to be clarified, individuals will need to provide details of how they can be contacted.

4.3, The earlier concerns are raised, the easier it will be to act accordingly.

4.4, Advice and guidance on how matters of concern may be pursued can be obtained here <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

4.5, Trade Union representatives may support an employee raising an issue of concern throughout the process.

5. How Saint Pierre School will respond

5.1, Any concern raised either in writing or verbally under the whistleblowing policy will be acknowledged in writing within 3 days and will:

- Acknowledge that the concern has been received.
- Summarise the details of the concern.
- Identify who is dealing with the matter.

5.2, The action taken by Saint Pierre School will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may be:

- Investigated internally.
- Referred to the Police.
- Referred to the External Auditor or Ombudsman.
- Referred to the National Standards Board.
- Subject of an independent enquiry.

5.3, In order to protect individuals and the school, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, safeguarding

children, vulnerable adults' protection, or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

5.4, Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for further investigation.

5.5, The amount of contact between the person considering the issues and the employee reporting the concern will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be obtained from the individual reporting the concern in a discreet manner.

5.6, When any meeting is arranged, individuals will have the right, if desired, to be accompanied by a trade union or other representative. The meeting can be arranged away from the normal place of work, if requested.

5.7, Saint Pierre School will take steps to minimise any difficulties which individuals may experience as a result of raising a concern and provide any appropriate support. For instance, if the individual is required to give evidence in disciplinary or criminal proceedings, the school will provide advice about the procedure.

5.8, Saint Pierre accepts that individuals raising a concern will need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed and will notify them when the whistleblowing policy process has been completed. This will normally be within 20 working days of a concern being raised. In addition, details will be given on what action has been taken to correct working practices, which have been found to be at fault by the investigation.

5.9, If an allegation is received anonymously, it may restrict what action the school is able to take. There is an expectation that the person reporting a matter will disclose their identity to the person receiving the report, as this will facilitate the investigation. Saint Pierre School will endeavour to maintain the person's anonymity wherever possible.

5.10, The following factors will be considered when establishing the scope and depth of any investigation:

- The seriousness of the issues raised.
- The credibility of the concern.
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from recognised sources and information available.

6. Safeguards

6.1, Saint Pierre School recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the alleged malpractice. At Saint Pierre we will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take immediate action to protect individuals wherever possible provided that:

- The concerns are raised in good faith.
- The information provided is believed to be true, even if the allegation is not subsequently confirmed by the investigation.
- Allegations are not made for personal gain.

6.2, Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality as far as is reasonably practical. Individuals should be aware that actions taken as a result of their report may lead to their identity being revealed, either by inference or as a result of disciplinary or legal proceedings. If this should happen, Saint Pierre School will not tolerate any individuals being victimised in any way.

6.3, Support will be provided to help overcome any difficulties experienced as a result of raising a concern. During the investigation, any meetings with the individual raising the concern can be arranged away from their place of work and they will have the opportunity to be accompanied by a representative of their choice, if they wish. If the individual is

required to present evidence as a witness, arrangements will be made to provide them with support through the process. Access to counselling and support is available to all employees.

6.4, Every effort will be made to keep the individual reporting the matter of concern informed. However, the information provided will be determined by the nature of the investigation and whilst safeguarding the rights of other individuals involved in the process.

7. Malicious Allegations

7.1, Southend Council/ Saint Pierre School will take action against any individual found to have made a malicious or fictitious allegation. For an employee, this could result in disciplinary proceedings.

8. Raising concerns outside of the school

8.1, This policy is intended to provide employees with an avenue to raise concerns within the school. If an employee instead takes the matter outside the school, they should ensure that they do not disclose confidential information. Employees should also check that they do not contravene the Public Interest Disclosure Act, as this does not provide blanket protection and only allows individuals to disclose matters to their employer or specified bodies. Any breach of the Act could lead to disciplinary action.

8.2, If an individual wishes to raise a concern outside the school or feels that Saint Pierre School has not handled their concern appropriately, the following possible contact points may be relevant —

- The Ombudsman - 0845 602 1983, www.lgo.org.uk
- The Audit Commission - 0844 7981212, www.audit-commission.gov.uk
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations

- Trade Union/Professional Association
- Your solicitor
- The Police
- The Health and Safety Executive

9. Monitoring

9.1, Monitoring of the Whistleblowing Procedure will be undertaken by the Headmaster/Proprietor (Peter Lane).