



**Ash Cartwright & Kelsey Church of England
(Aided) Primary School**

Whistle Blowing policy

Lead Member of Staff Head Teacher

Lead Governor

Policy agreed by Governors: March 2015

Policy due for review: March 2018

We believe that our school is welcoming safe and stimulating, promoting a love of learning and offering opportunities for all to succeed. As a Church school we see friendship, forgiveness, respect and compassion as being at the heart of what we do.

This set of values is reflected in all our policies.

At Ash Cartwright & Kelsey Church of England (Aided) Primary School we aim, in accordance with the School's Christian Foundation, to provide a school that is welcoming safe and stimulating, promoting a love of learning and offering opportunities for all to succeed. As a Church school we see friendship, forgiveness, respect and compassion as being at the heart of what we do. It is in this context that we seek to promote a sense of self worth in both children and staff within a happy, safe and secure environment. Every child is encouraged and challenged to fulfil their full potential and have respect and consideration for themselves, their peers and the world around them.

As a Church of England (Aided) Primary School we aim to provide a happy, safe, secure, welcoming environment for all our pupils and staff. The caring ethos of our school and our unified and coherent set of values based on the Christian faith enable us to recognise the dignity of each human being. We aim to develop, in each child, self-esteem, a sense of responsibility, an understanding of the needs of others and a respect for their way of life.

This policy applies to Ash Cartwright & Kelsey Church of England (Aided) Primary School and Fledglings Nursery. It has been considered by the Governing Body and the procedures endorsed and individuals have been made aware of its existence.

The school is fully committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. Employees and others working with us are encouraged to raise concerns about any aspect of our work and to come forward and express them. In some circumstances concerns may be raised on a confidential basis.

This policy applies to all employees, agency workers, staff from partner groups and agencies and contractors working on the school premises e.g. grounds staff, drivers and builders.

The procedure for whistle blowing is separate from the school's complaints procedures and other statutory reporting responsibilities. Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring those making use of services offered by the school are aware of these procedures. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect an individual.

This policy aims to ensure that individuals are:

- encouraged to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act on concerns about practice;
- provided with avenues to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- given a response to their concerns and for individual to be aware of how to pursue their concerns further if they are not satisfied;
- Reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that any disclosure has been made in good faith.

There are existing policies in place to enable individuals to lodge a grievance related to their own employment including issues relating to harassment and bullying.

What does whistle blowing cover?

Malpractice and wrongdoing will include the following:

- Any unlawful act, whether criminal or breach of civil law
- Maladministration, as defined by the Local Government Ombudsman
- Breach of statutory Code of Practice
- Any failure to comply with appropriate professional standards
- Breach of or failure to implement or comply with Financial Regulations or Standing Orders
- Fraud, corruption or dishonesty
- Actions which are likely to cause physical danger to any person, or to give rise to a risk of significant damage to property
- Past, current or likely damage to the environment
- Loss of income to the school
- Abuse of power, or the use of the school's powers and authority for any unauthorised or ulterior purpose
- Discrimination in employment of the provision of education
- Any other matter which cannot be raised through any other procedure

Ash Cartwright & Kelsey CE [Aided] Primary School's Complaints Procedure should be used to raise issues, concerns or complaints of a health and safety nature and which are not confidential.

Confidentiality

This will be on a confidential basis. The school will make every effort to protect individuals identity if that is their wish. However, individuals should be aware that it may not be possible to protect identity if they are required to come forward as a witness.

Anonymous Allegations

All individuals are encouraged to put their name to the allegations as those expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those attributed to a named individual. However, anonymous allegations will still be considered and investigated at KCC's discretion. Factors to be taken into account will include the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Untrue allegations

If an allegation which is made in good faith is not subsequently confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken against the individual raising the concern. However, disciplinary action will be taken against those who knowingly make false, malicious or vexatious allegations.

Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing. Concerns raised in writing should set out the background and history of the concerns, giving names, dates and place wherever possible and include the reason for the concern.

Individuals are encouraged to raise concerns as early as possible since the earlier it is raised the easier it is to take action. Individuals are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, but will need to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds to raise a concern.

Whenever possible you should raise your concern with an individual's immediate manager or the Head Teacher.

A trade union or professional association may raise a matter on behalf of a staff member.

How the school will respond

The action that is taken will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- be investigated internally by management, Internal Audit or through the disciplinary or other internal process;
- be referred to the Police;
- be referred to the KCC;
- form the subject of an independent inquiry;
- advise Canterbury Diocese.

In order to protect the individual and the school, initial inquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (e.g. child

protection or discrimination) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation. If urgent action is required, then this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

Within 10 working days, the individual raising the concern will receive written notification:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- indicating how the school proposes to deal with the matter;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- informing you if any initial enquires have been made;
- whether any further investigations will take place, and if not then why not,

Contact

The amount of contact between the individual and the manager considering the complaint will depend on the nature of the matter raised, potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought.

Attending meetings

When any meeting is arranged, the individual has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

Support

The school is committed to minimise difficulties that an individual may experience as a result of the raising the concern. For example, in an instance where the individual is required to give evidence in a criminal or disciplinary proceeding, the school will seek advice from KCC and will advise or arrange for advice to be given about the procedure.

The school will not tolerate harassment or victimisation (including informal pressure) and is committed to taking action to protect anyone who raises a concern in good faith.

The school accepts that individuals raising a concern need assurance that concerns are properly addressed and, subject to legal constraints, will provide information about the outcome of any investigations.

Taking the matter further

Should any member of staff need to raise a concern about KCC or feel unsatisfied by the outcome, the following contacts can be used:

- Public Concern at work 020 74046609(details overleaf)
- Audit commission 020 7630 1019
- A local Kent County Council member
- Relevant professional body or regulatory organisation
- A solicitor
- The Police

If the matter is taken outside of the school, individuals must take reasonable steps to ensure that confidential information is not disclosed. If in doubt, then staff should check with KCC.

Public Interest Disclosure

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives KCC employees the following safeguards in respect of disclosures of information:

- An employee is entitled not to be submitted to any detriment by virtue of having made a protected disclosure
- The dismissal of any school/KCC employee directly due to the individual having made such a disclosure will automatically be unfair.

Further Information

Further information can be sought from staff appointed by KCC to deal with Whistle Blowing. There may be circumstances when individuals may wish to seek independent advice before taking the matter forward through the formal channels at KCC. The charity **Public Concern at Work** provides free confidential advice to those individuals who have concerns about wrongdoing in their workplace. The contact details are:

3rd Floor, Bank Chambers
6 - 10 Borough High Street
London SE1 9QQ

0207 404 6609 or www.pcaw.org.uk or email whistle@pcaw.org.uk

Reviewed by Head Teacher March 2015

Next review: March 2018

Signed: _____

Date: _____