



South East Cornwall Multi Academy
Regional Trust

Confidential Reporting
('Whistle-blowing') Policy

Approved by the Trust Board on 23rd March 2017

This Policy will be reviewed during the Spring Term 2019

1. Introduction

The procedure is intended to supplement, rather than to replace, the existing complaints, disciplinary and grievance procedures. It is intended to cover serious concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures and may relate to something which:

- is against the Financial Regulations and policies
- is against the School's policies and procedures, or
- falls below established standards of practice, or
- amounts to improper conduct, including something you believe may be:
 - against the law
 - a Health and Safety risk
 - damaging to the environment
 - misuse of public money
 - corruption or unethical conduct
 - abuse of clients or service users

The Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees who have serious concerns about any aspect of any of the schools' work or work undertaken by the trust or its constituent academies to come forward and voice those concerns.

This procedure makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. It is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious problems within the academies rather than overlooking a problem or "blowing the whistle" outside.

2. Aims and Scope of this Procedure

This procedure aims to:

- encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice;
- provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied;
- reassure you that you will be protected from possible victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith;
- OR reassure you that you should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

3. Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made to protect your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to provide a statement or act as a witness and will be expected to co-operate fully with the investigation and disclose all relevant information.

4. Anonymous Allegations

This procedure encourages you to put your name to your concern as anonymous allegations may often be difficult to substantiate/prove.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be investigated unless the SMART's Monitoring Governor in consultation with the Chair of Trust Board agrees there is insufficient evidence to proceed.

5. Untrue Allegations

If you raise a concern in good faith, but it is not subsequently confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

6. External Disclosures

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely, if ever, be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work holds a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a contractor, supplier or service provider. The law allows you to raise a concern with a third party, where you reasonably believe it relates mainly to their actions or something that is legally their responsibility. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally first.

7. How to Raise a Concern

As a first step you should normally raise concerns with your line manager. The line manager should take appropriate action. However, if this line of communication is not satisfactory then you should approach a more senior colleague such as the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. Alternatively you could approach the school's Whistleblower, the Chair of the Trust Board or the Chair of the Local Governing Committee.

The matter will then be passed to the Trust Board's monitoring Director.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.

Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of your concerns, you will need to demonstrate that you have reasonable grounds to raise them.

Where employees fail to report their concerns they may become themselves implicated and consequently the Directors may treat failure by an employee to report such matters as a serious matter which could lead to disciplinary action.

You may wish to obtain assistance in putting forward your concern from a Trade Union representative or a colleague. You may choose to be represented by a Trade Union representative or colleague at any meetings which are required.

8. How the Trust Board will Respond

In order to protect individuals and the Directors, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. At this stage the Trust Board can agree to delegate the matter to the Local Governing Committee. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example Child Protection issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

The person with whom you have raised your concern will inform the relevant Director of the facts. The Director, or Chair of the Local Governing Committee if it has been delegated to them, will write to you within ten working days with the following:

- acknowledgement that the concern has been received;
- an indication of how the concern will be dealt with;
- an estimate of how long it will take to provide a full response;
- whether any initial enquiries have been made;
- whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.

The Director, or Chair of the Local Governing Committee if it has been delegated to them, will inform you in writing of the outcome of any investigation, or any action taken, subject to the constraints of confidentiality and the law.

9. The Responsible Officer

SMART's monitoring Director has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy within the Trust. They will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes and will report as necessary to the Trust Board. The recording and reporting procedure will be in a form which ensures your confidentiality.

10. How the Matter can be Taken Further

This procedure is intended to provide you with a route within the Multi Academy Trust to raise concerns but if you do not feel your concern has been addressed adequately you may raise it with an independent body such as one of the following:

- your Trade Union
- our external auditor
- your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- a relevant professional body or regulatory organisation
- a relevant voluntary organisation
- the police

- the Local Government Ombudsman

You have a duty to SMART not to disclose confidential information. This does not prevent you from raising concerns with an independent body referred to above, or any of the contacts stated below.

Contacts

Whistleblowing Officers (all of whom are governors)

Dobwalls Community Primary School – Dorothy Tamblin 01579 320483

Landulph School – Steve Pearson – 01752 845280

Liskeard School and Community College – Helen Arnold – 01579 321048
helenarnold111@googlemail

Mark Wigley – 07974782762, Mark@dobwalls55.plus.com

Looe Community Academy – Marie Long – 01503 262625

Saltash.net community school – Professor Brian Chalkley – 01752 844304

Trewidland Primary School - Mr Charlie Boney - 01579 344055
charlesrboney@gmail.com

The Trust's external auditors – Bishop Fleming – 01752 262611

Public Concern at Work – helpline: 020 7404 6609 – www.pcaw.co.uk –
whistle@pcaw.co.uk, a registered charity which advises on serious malpractice within
the workplace in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act
1998.