

# **St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School, Knutsford**

## **Whistle Blowing Policy: Safeguarding**

### **Mission Statement:**

**“It is the mission of this Catholic School to enable our children to become aware of the world that God has given them and to recognise their vocation and responsibilities within it.”**



This guidance is written for staff<sup>1</sup> working with children and young people in education settings including maintained schools and are in line with LSCB guidance and OFSTED's Whistle blowing procedures. Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

<sup>1</sup> Staff includes any adult, paid or voluntary, who works in a school or educational establishment within the LA

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable young person or children who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Whistle blowing is not an easy action to take. Staff should be reassured that their concerns will be received by Senior Managers in good faith, without fear of repercussions or persecution.

*The environment enabled a culture to develop in which staff did not feel able to challenge some inappropriate behaviour by George. Staff working at the nursery became increasingly uncomfortable and worried about George's behaviour but felt they had nowhere to go with these feelings. Plymouth Serious Case Review – Little Teds Nursery (5.62) March 2010*

## **Don't think what if I'm wrong - think what if I'm right**

### **Reasons for whistle blowing**

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

### **What stops people from whistle blowing**

- Starting a chain of events which spirals
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

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### **How to raise a concern**

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- Approach the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding, Mrs G Davies, Acting Head Teacher.
- If your concern is about the Headteacher, contact Mr D. Grieves, Chair of Governors.
- Ideally, you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

### **What happens next**

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries, make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest.
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

### **Self reporting**

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

### **Further advice and support**

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager, HR department and/or your professional or trade union.

***"Absolutely without fail challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong"***

(reproduced with acknowledgement to "Sounding the Alarm" – Barnardos)

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January 2017

Policy Holder: G Davies

Due for Renewal January 2018