

Gillespie Primary School



Whistleblowing Policy October 2020

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The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage employees, agency staff and contractors to report inappropriate action or behaviour within Gillespie School without fear of victimisation or retribution.

Gillespie takes whistleblowing seriously, in order to promote a culture of openness and accountability. The school encourages all staff / volunteers to raise concerns they may have about dangerous practices or serious risk as early as possible. The Headteacher/Deputy or the Governors will respond appropriately (see below) to promote a safer organisation.

What is whistleblowing?

In practical terms, whistleblowing occurs when a concern is raised about danger or illegality that affects others. This is different from a complaint or grievance when you are saying that you personally have been poorly treated.

The procedure applies when there is the reasonable belief that there has been wrongdoing such as

- a danger to the health and safety of an individual
- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- damage to the environment
- a failure to comply with the school's policies and procedures
- any conduct which may damage the School's reputation
- deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above

In relation to the conduct of the School's business, including activities carried out by contractors on its behalf. Further examples are given in Appendix 1.

What should I do?

Staff should raise their concerns with any of:

- The Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- The Chair or Vice-Chair of Governors (governors@gillespie.islington.sch.uk)
- Islington's Whistleblowing Officer (07979 834 012)
- Their line manager if a contractor

As soon as any suspected malpractice or abuse becomes apparent. This can be done verbally or in writing.

You do not need to have firm evidence before raising a concern. But we ask that you explain as fully as you can the information or circumstances that gave rise to your concern.

Alternatively, for an informal discussion, you can contact
Claire Bolderson (Chair) governors@gillespie.islington.sch.uk
Ashley Smith (Vice-Chair) governors@islington.islington.sch.uk

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides you with protection from victimisation, dismissal or any other detriment provided you have a reasonable belief that what you have reported is true and the report is made in good faith.

How Gillespie will handle the matter

Concerns reported to the Head teacher/Deputy, or Chair/Deputy Chair of Governors may be investigated within the school and dealt with by them, or may be passed to the local authority depending upon the content of the concern.

The Headteacher/Deputy must report any whistleblowing to the Chair/Vice-Chair of Governors within 24 hours.

The school must inform the Council's Whistleblowing officer (CBO) within 24 hours of receiving a whistle blowing report. The CBO will inform the Director of Schools and Learning and the Head of Schools Human Resources.

Procedure to be followed if an investigation is to be carried out

- An interview with the whistle blower **within 10 working days** of the initial concern being raised. The whistle blower can be accompanied at the interview by a trade union representative or a work place colleague
- If the initial concerns were made verbally, then the whistle blower will be asked to provide a written statement;
- The whistle blower will receive a written acknowledgement of the report and be informed of the action being taken to investigate the concern;
- The whistle blower where possible will be kept informed of the progress and likely timescales of the investigation unless the investigating officer believes that there is a risk of the investigation being prejudiced;
- In some circumstances, the matter will be referred to an outside agency such as the police.

Conclusion of the investigation and subsequent actions

Whenever possible, feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation will be given to the whistle-blower.

If the allegation is not proven or there is insufficient evidence on which to base the conclusion, the whistle blower will be advised accordingly.

In cases where action is necessary as a result of the allegation, a report will usually be sent to the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, who will be responsible for implementing the recommendations in the report. The whistle blower will be advised when the investigation is complete but it may not always be possible to provide the details of the findings as this may be confidential.

If the investigation concerns inappropriate action by the Headteacher or Governors, the report will be sent direct to the Council's Whistleblowing Officer and to the Director of Schools and Young People's Services.

For child protection, please see the Child Protection policy for more details.

Islington Council contacts

If you feel unable to raise the matter with the Headteacher/Deputy or the Governors, for whatever reason, you can contact Islington's officers directly:

- for **child safeguarding**: Islington's LADO on 020 7527 8066
- for **victimisation** or other personnel matters: the Head of Schools' Human Resources on 020 7527 5677.
- for **fraud**: Islington's Whistleblowing Officer (07979 834 012)
- for **health & safety**: Health & Safety Manager (020 7527 5971)

They will also offer advice. You may also obtain advice or help from:

- Audit Commission Public Interest Disclosure Act Hotline Tel: 0845 052 2646
- Public Concern at Work Tel: 020 7404 6609 www.pcaw.co.uk/

Maintaining Anonymity

You are encouraged to give your name when raising concerns. It gives the concern more weight and will make it easier to investigate.

The School recognises that whistleblowers may wish to raise concerns in confidence. If you make a request for the matter to be kept confidential, your identity will only be disclosed to those directly involved in investigating the allegation.

The Head/Deputy or Governors will do their best to maintain your anonymity throughout the enquiry but if they consider it necessary to formally identify they will always discuss this with you in advance.

Allegations not made in Good Faith

Concerns that are raised frivolously, maliciously, or for personal gain may result in disciplinary action.

Appendix 1 – further examples

- something that makes them feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, their experience or the standards they believe the school or Islington Council subscribes to; or
- something that is against the school's or Islington Council's procedures, rules and policies; or
- something that falls below established standards of practice; or
- something that amounts to improper conduct; or
- the unauthorised use of public funds; or
- fraud and corruption; or
- a significant breach of child protection and/or safeguarding policy and procedures
- homophobic, racial, religious, sexual or physical abuse of children, staff, governors, or other users or
- conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law;
- disclosures related to actual or potential miscarriages of justice;
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees;
- other unethical conduct;