



# Mareham Le Fen CE Primary School

## Whistleblowing Policy

Date policy last reviewed: January 2026

# Whistleblowing Policy

## 1. Introduction

This Whistleblowing Policy provides a framework for employees and others connected with the school to raise concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, or behaviour that is not in line with legal, professional, or ethical standards. The school is committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty, and accountability, and recognises the importance of providing a safe and supportive environment in which concerns can be raised.

## 2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All school employees (including teaching and support staff)
- Governors
- Agency staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors and suppliers working on behalf of the school

This policy does not replace the school's existing procedures for grievances, complaints, disciplinary matters, or safeguarding. Concerns relating to child protection or safeguarding must be reported immediately in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

## 3. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), which provides protection for workers who raise concerns in the public interest. A disclosure that meets the requirements of PIDA is known as a 'protected disclosure'.

## 4. What Is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of concerns about suspected wrongdoing, malpractice, or risks that are in the public interest. This may include:

- Criminal offences (e.g. fraud, theft, bribery, corruption, money laundering)
- Failure to comply with legal obligations or statutory requirements

- Health and safety risks or breaches that could harm employees or the public
- Misuse of public funds or school resources
- Discrimination or harassment in the workplace based on factors such as:
  - race
  - gender
  - age
  - disability
  - sexual orientation
- Concealment of information about a serious risk to public health or safety
- Environmental damage or violations of environmental regulations

It is important to note that for a disclosure to be protected under PIDA, it must:

- be made in good faith
- be based on a reasonable belief
- follow the procedures outlined in this whistleblowing policy

Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

## 5. What Is Not Covered

This policy does not cover personal grievances, such as individual employment concerns, bullying, or complaints about working conditions, unless they are considered to be in the wider public interest. These should be raised through the school's grievance or complaints procedures.

## 6. Principles

The school is committed to ensuring that:

- Concerns are taken seriously and investigated appropriately
- Individuals feel able to raise concerns without fear of reprisal
- Confidentiality is respected wherever possible

- No employee or individual will suffer harassment, victimisation, or disadvantage for raising a genuine concern in good faith

## 7. Confidentiality and Anonymity

The school understands that individuals may wish to raise concerns confidentially. Confidentiality will be respected as far as possible; however, there may be circumstances where it is not possible to maintain confidentiality, for example where a criminal investigation or safeguarding issue arises.

The school does not encourage anonymous disclosures as the concerns are more difficult to investigate and are less powerful. The school encourages individuals to provide their name wherever possible so that concerns can be properly addressed and support offered.

Anonymous disclosures will be considered at the discretion of the person handling the concern based on:

- seriousness of the issues raised
- credibility of the concern
- likelihood of confirming the allegation from an attributable source
- evidence base

The school takes all concerns seriously and assures you that no action will be taken against you if you have raised a concern in the genuine belief that it is or may be true.

## 8. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should normally be raised internally in the first instance. This allows the school the opportunity to investigate and address issues promptly.

Concerns may be raised:

- With the staff member's line manager
- With the Headteacher
- With the Chair of Governors (if the concern involves the Headteacher)

Concerns should preferably be made in writing and include relevant background information, dates, names, places (where possible) and reasons for concern. Individuals are not expected to prove the allegation but should demonstrate sufficient grounds for their concern.

## 9. How the School Will Respond

- The school will acknowledge receipt of the concern within a reasonable timeframe.
- An initial assessment will be carried out to determine whether the appropriate response is advice only or whether the concern can be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.
- Where appropriate, an internal investigation will be undertaken by a suitable and impartial person
- The individual raising the concern will be informed, where possible and appropriate, of the outcome, subject to legal and confidentiality constraints

The school may decide to refer the matter to an external body (e.g. local authority, safeguarding partners, police)

## 10. Protection and Support

The school will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of anyone who raises a concern in good faith. Any such behaviour will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Support will be offered to individuals who raise concerns, including advice and guidance where required.

## 11. Malicious or Vexatious Allegations

If an allegation is found to have been made maliciously or in bad faith, disciplinary action may be taken. Individuals who make deliberately false allegations will not be protected under this policy.

## 12. Taking Matters Further

If an individual believes their concern has not been handled appropriately, they may raise the matter with the Chair of Governors or seek external advice from a prescribed body, such as the local authority or a recognised whistleblowing advice organisation.

## 13. Monitoring and Review

The governing body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy. It will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance.