Northstar
New School

# Whistle-blowing Policy 2025-2026

| This policy was reviewed on: | This policy was ratified/reviewed by Governors on: |
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| **Date:** September 2025 | **Date:** September 2025 |
| **By:** Euan Macdonald | |
| **Policy will be reviewed on:** August 2026 | **Frequency of review:** Annually |

Note: This document uses the most current Government information and guidance at the time of writing. It may change according to Government policy.

# 1 Introduction

At Northstar New School we are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage staff and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns. In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis. This policy has been written in conjunction with the guidance set out by the Department for Education document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2025.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or relevant agencies. This procedure encourages staff to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within school rather than overlooking a problem or raising the matter outside.

It applies to all staff, agency workers and supply staff and those contractors working on the premises, for example, cleaners, builders and drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with Northstar New School.

It is recognised that whistle blowing may engender feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or that staff may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in the continuing behaviour that is causing concern.

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

# 2 Other Complaints Procedures

This procedure is separate from the School Complaints Procedures and other statutory reporting procedures. Child Protection issues should be reported according to the specific guidelines laid out in that policy.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect an individual.

## 3 Behaviour that should cause concern

- ➔ conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- ➔ conduct that has occurred, is occurring or likely occurs the result of which the school fails to comply with a legal obligation. For example, unauthorised use of school funds, possible fraud and corruption, verbal, sexual or physical abuse, or other unethical conduct discrimination of any kind and waste/frivolous expenditure
- ➔ disclosures related past, current or likely miscarriages of justice
- ➔ past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- ➔ concerns regarding the way the school safeguards pupils – including poor or unsafe practice, or potential failures

## 4 Reasons for whistleblowing

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

## 5 What stops people from whistleblowing

- ➔ 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.

## 6 How to raise a concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can with your line manager. 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.
- If your concern is about your immediate line manager approach the headteacher. If your concern is about the headteacher, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the LADO (local authority designated officer) or the Chair of Governors. Contact information below.
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – do NOT let matters rest.
- 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 you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

## 7 What happens next

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- 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.

## 8 Confidentiality

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness.

## 9 Anonymous Allegations

Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those that are attributed to a named individual. However anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at the school's discretion.

In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- ➔ the seriousness of the issues raised
- ➔ the credibility of the concern; and
- ➔ the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

## 10 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 the Headteacher so professional and personal support can be offered to the members 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.

## 11 Further advice, support & contact details

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is

available from:

- ➔ Headteacher
- ➔ Chair of Governors
- ➔ Head of HR
- ➔ LADO

## 12 Contact details

Headteacher: mickie.foley@northstarnewschool.org

LADO:Mike.Cullern@lbbd.gov.uk

Chair of Governors: cog@northstarnewschool.org