



Whistle Blowing Policy
(The Reporting of Malpractice and Improper Conduct)

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| Approved by the governing body on:- | 27 th January 2015 |
| Signed (Chair of Governors) | |
| Review Date | January 2016 |

INTRODUCTION

What is it?

All of us at one time or another have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are about unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, misconduct, bad practice, Health and Safety issues or dangers to the pupils, parents and others, or to the environment, it can be difficult to know what to do.

You may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to yourself, perhaps feeling it's none of your business or that it's only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, managers, governors or to the school. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.

The policy is introduced to enable staff to raise their concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. They would prefer that staff raise the matter when it is just a concern rather than wait for proof. This policy has been adapted so that it is also suitable for use by staff in schools.

Therefore, if something is troubling you that you think we should know about, or look into, please use this policy. If, however, you are aggrieved about your personal position, or have a complaint that is already covered by a core policy such as the Grievance Procedure or Anti-Harassment Policy please use it - you can get a copy from the school or from the Schools' Personnel. This Whistleblowing Policy is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or of the school itself are at risk.

If in doubt – raise it!

OUR ASSURANCES TO YOU

Your safety

The Council's Chief Executive and Members are committed to the Whistleblowing Policy, as are the governors. If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Provided you are acting in good faith, it does not matter if you are mistaken. Of course, we do not extend this assurance to someone who maliciously raises a matter s/he knows is untrue.

Your confidence

We will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, we recognise that you may nonetheless want to raise a concern in confidence under this policy. If you ask us to protect your identity by keeping your confidence, we will not disclose it without your consent. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identity (for instance because your evidence is needed in court), we will discuss with you whether and how we can proceed.

Remember that if you do not tell us who you are and raise your concern anonymously, it will be much more difficult for us to look into the matter or to protect your position or to give you feedback. Accordingly, while we will consider anonymous reports, this policy is not well suited to concerns raised in this way.

If you do raise a concern we will maintain your confidence and will not disclose your identity without your prior consent. By doing so, we can protect your position, gain further information if required and give you feedback on what has happened.

HOW WE WILL HANDLE THE MATTER

Once you have told us of your concern, we will look into it to assess initially what action should be taken. This may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. We will tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact them and whether your further assistance may be needed. If you request it, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it.

When you raise the concern you may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you do have any personal interest in the matter, we do ask that you tell us at the outset. If your concern falls more properly within the Grievance Procedure or other Policy we will tell you.

While the purpose of this policy is to enable us to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, we will give you as much feedback as we properly can. If requested, we will confirm our response to you in writing. Please note, however, that we may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed by us to someone else.

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN INTERNALLY

Prior to raising a concern, please note:

(1) If you are a member of a Professional Association or Trade Union, it may have in place a Code, or rules, which set out how members should behave in relation to raising concerns involving colleagues and/or in relation to dealings with colleagues in general. You are advised, in these circumstances, to familiarise yourself with any such Code or rules or contact your Union for further advice before taking action.

(2) Where you have concerns relating to a child protection issue, you should take action in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and any other advice and guidance set out by the Area Child Protection Committee, Local Safeguarding Children Board or the Department for Education and Skills.

Step one

If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with **your manager**. This may be done orally or in writing.

Step two

If you feel unable to raise the matter with your manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with:

The Headteacher or the Chair of Governors (*as appropriate*)

Please say if you want to raise the matter in confidence so that they can make appropriate arrangements.

Step three

If you are not confident in approaching any of the named persons in steps one and two, you can at any stage contact the Council's Monitoring Officer or Investigations Team for advice or to raise your concern.

Freephone:0800 0853716

Email:whistleblowing@lincolnshire.gov.uk

In writing: Lincolnshire Local Authorities, PO Box 640, Lincoln, LN1 1WF

Step four

If you have genuine concerns about how we have handled your whistleblowing disclosure you can raise this with the investigating officer(s) and/or the Monitoring Officer. We hope that you will reach a suitable conclusion to the matter but if you remain dissatisfied you can contact the Council's external auditors at:

KPMG
St Nicholas House
31 Park Row
Nottingham
NG1 6FQ

You may also refer your concern to the Local Government Ombudsman – they generally do not take any action until the matter has been dealt with internally first. They can be contacted at:

The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry, CV4 0EH
Tel. 0300 061 0614 (Local Government Ombudsman – Advice Team)

INDEPENDENT ADVICE

If you are unsure whether to use this policy or you want independent advice at any stage, you may contact

- The independent charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 or www.pcaw.co.uk. Their lawyers can give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work.

EXTERNAL CONTACTS

We hope this policy gives you the reassurance you need to raise such matters internally. **IF, HOWEVER, YOU HAVE EXHAUSTED ALL INTERNAL CONTACTS, AS REFERRED TO ABOVE,** and consider that the matter remains unresolved you may, **AS A LAST RESORT,** contact one of the Agencies below. If you do decide to contact one of these Agencies, please ensure that you are acting in good faith and have evidence to back up your concerns(s).

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| Health and Safety Executive | - | health and safety risks |
| Environment Agency | - | environmental issues |
| Inland Revenue/Customs and Excise | - | financial irregularities |
| Audit Commission | - | public sector finance |
| Data Protection Registrar | - | data protection issues |
| The Standards Board for England | - | Member activity |
| The Office of Information Commissioner | - | freedom of information |

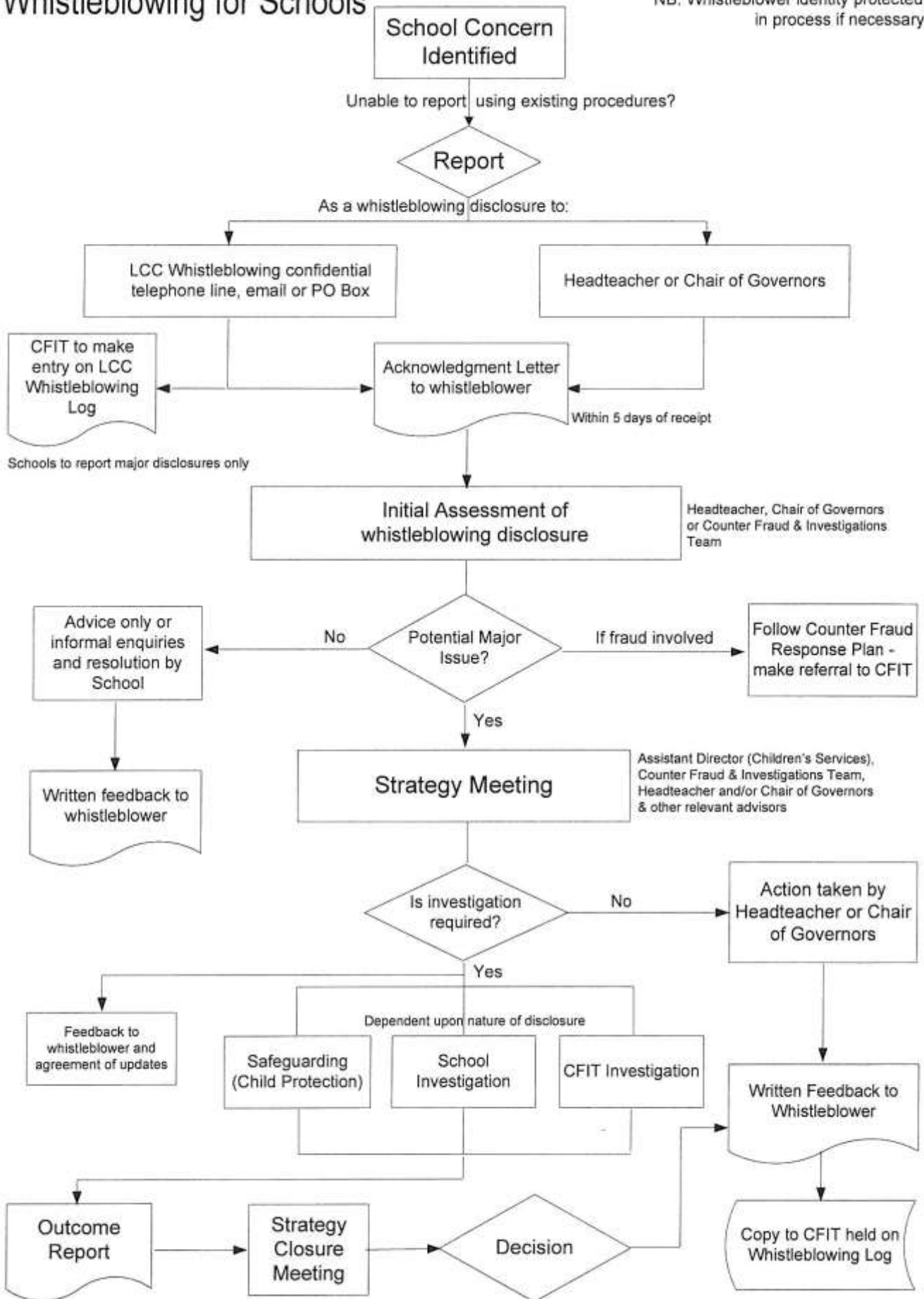
IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED

If you are unhappy with our response, remember you can go to the other levels and bodies detailed in this Policy.

While we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, we will try to handle the matter fairly and properly. By using this policy, you will help us to achieve this.

Whistleblowing for Schools

NB. Whistleblower identity protected in process if necessary



LCC Whistleblowing Log held by Counter Fraud & Investigations Team (CFIT)