

Stanborough Primary School & Nursery

Whistleblowing Policy



Approved by:	Stanborough Primary School Governing Body	Date:
Last reviewed on:	April 2026	
Next review due by:	April 2028	

“Whistleblowing” Procedure

Reporting illegal or improper conduct or concerns about safeguarding children or young people.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Stanborough Nursery and Primary School expects the highest standards of conduct from all employees, and will treat seriously any concern that an employee may have about illegal or improper conduct.

1.2 Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the Headteacher any serious impropriety or breach of procedure.

1.3 This procedure has been introduced in consultation with the trade unions and professional associations.

1.4 This policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which provides legal protection to employees who make disclosures in the public interest. Employees who raise genuine concerns under this policy are protected from dismissal or detriment as a result of whistleblowing.

2 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROCEDURE?

2.1 This procedure is designed to enable employees to notify the Headteacher (but see 4.1) of any reasonable suspicion of illegal or improper conduct. Where the concerns are about safeguarding children or young people, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection should be notified (see 7 below).

2.2 It is a procedure in which the Headteacher will be expected to act swiftly and constructively in the investigation of any concerns in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.

2.3 Concern about a colleague's professional capability should not be dealt with using this procedure (but see section 7 below).

3 WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?

3.1 This procedure is not designed to replace or be used as an alternative to the grievance procedure, which should be used where an employee is only aggrieved about his/her own situation.

3.2 Employees who are worried about wrongdoing at work do not necessarily have a personal grievance.

3.3 Employees must act in good faith and must have reasonable grounds for believing the information to be accurate.

3.4 No employee who uses this procedure in good faith will be penalised for doing so. The school will not tolerate harassment and/or victimisation of any employee raising concerns.

Any employee who victimises or retaliates against a colleague for raising a genuine concern under this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

If you believe you have been victimised as a result of raising a concern under this policy, you should report this immediately to the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the concern relates to the Headteacher). This will be treated as a serious matter and investigated promptly

3.5 An employee who is not sure whether the conduct he/she is concerned about does constitute illegal or improper conduct or is unsure about how to proceed can contact any of the names listed in section 8 for advice.

3.6 Financial regulations require any employee who suspects fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity to ensure this is reported to the Chair of Governors for possible investigation. Normally you must first report any

suspicion of such an irregularity to the Headteacher (but see 4.1), who will in turn report it to the Chair of Governors. In most cases this will be done through your line management structure.

3.7 No employee who uses this procedure in good faith will be penalised for doing so. The school will not tolerate harassment and/or victimisation of any employee raising concerns.

Any employee who victimises or retaliates against a colleague for raising a genuine concern under this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

If you believe you have been victimised as a result of raising a concern under this policy, you should report this immediately to the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the concern relates to the Headteacher). This will be treated as a serious matter and investigated promptly

4 MECHANISM FOR RAISING CONCERNS

4.1 Where the issue concerns your Headteacher or, having made your report, you believe he/she has failed to take appropriate action, then you should bring it to the attention of the Chair of Governors.

4.2 Employees who feel unable to follow this route, for whatever reason, have the option of contacting one of the names listed in section 8.

4.3 Depending on the nature of the concern the complainant will be asked to justify and support their claim. Normally the complainant will be asked to do this in writing. It will, therefore, be helpful to note down any facts and dates as they happen.

4.4 Employees who want to use the procedure but feel uneasy about it may wish to consult their trade union initially and bring a friend or trade union representative along to any discussions, so long as the third party is independent of the issue.

4.5 Employees are encouraged to put their name to concerns wherever possible, as:

- Concerns expressed anonymously are much more difficult to investigate
- It is more difficult to protect your position or provide feedback if you remain anonymous
- It is more difficult to establish whether the concern is being raised in good faith

However, anonymous concerns will be considered and investigated where:

- The concern is sufficiently serious
- There is sufficient information provided to enable an investigation
- The credibility of the allegation can be demonstrated

The decision on whether to investigate an anonymous concern will be made by the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the concern relates to the Headteacher).

4.6 Investigation process

Once a concern has been raised:

- The concern will be assessed to determine what action should be taken. This may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation
- You will be informed of who is handling the matter and how you can contact them
- The school will write to you within 10 working days to:
 - Acknowledge that the concern has been received
 - Indicate how the school proposes to deal with the matter
 - Tell you whether any initial enquiries have been made
 - Tell you whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not
 - Give you an estimate of how long the investigation will take

- Where possible, you will be informed of the outcome of any investigation. However, this may be limited by:
 - Confidentiality obligations to other individuals
 - Legal restrictions
 - The need to protect the investigation process
- If you are not satisfied with the response, you should raise this with the Chair of Governors in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied, you may raise the matter with one of the external bodies listed in section 8.

5 WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IF AN ISSUE IS RAISED WITH A MEMBER OF STAFF?

5.1 If a member of staff (other than the Headteacher) is approached by a colleague on a matter of concern as defined in this document, he/she should be advised to take the matter to the Headteacher (but see 4.1).

6 EXAMPLES OF ILLEGAL AND/OR IMPROPER CONDUCT

This policy covers concerns that are in the public interest. Examples include:

Illegal or improper conduct:

- Fraudulent or improper use of the school's money or assets
- Corruptly receiving any gift or advantage
- Allowing private interests to override the interests of the school
- Criminal offences
- Breach of legal obligations
- Failure to comply with the Independent School Standards

Health and safety:

- Dangerous practices at work
- Risks to health and safety of pupils, staff or visitors
- Damage to the environment

Safeguarding:

- Concerns about the safety and welfare of children (see section 7)
- Failure to comply with safeguarding procedures
- Failure to comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education

Other serious concerns:

- Covering up wrongdoing
- Failure to comply with professional or regulatory standards
- Serious breach of school policies or procedures
- Miscarriages of justice
- Conduct likely to damage the school's reputation

This list is not exhaustive. If you are unsure whether your concern falls within this policy, you should seek advice from one of the contacts listed in section 8.

7 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

7.1 All employees have a duty to report concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils to Hertfordshire Children's Services on 0300 123 4043 (verify this number is still current).

Where concerns relate to allegations against staff members that meet the harm threshold (see section 7.2), the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be contacted. The LADO contact details for Hertfordshire can be found at: LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk or call 0300 123 4043

7.2 Concerns about any of the following should be reported to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Physical abuse of a pupil

- Sexual abuse of a pupil
- Emotional abuse of a pupil
- Neglect of a pupil

Allegations against staff:

Where there is an allegation that a member of staff (including volunteers, contractors, governors, or the headteacher) has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

The school's DSL is Rebecca Dean

Where the concern relates to an allegation against a member of staff that meets the harm threshold above, the DSL will notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day, in accordance with Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

7.3 The reason for the concern may be the actions of a colleague (including a more senior colleague), a governor, another pupil/student or someone outside the school. Whatever the reason, concerns must be reported.

7.4 If the person raising a safeguarding concern feels that this has not been addressed fully or that the situation has not improved, they must press the DSL for reconsideration. If necessary, they should make a direct referral to Hertfordshire Children's Services on 0300 123 4043.

8 NAMES TO CONTACT (see 3.5 and 4.2)

BUC HR

Executive Secretary:
Tel:

Jacques Venter
01923 672251

Chair of Governors

BUC President:
Tel:

Eglan Brooks
01923 672251

STANDARDS & SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

BUC Education Director:
Tel:

Lorraine McDonald
01923 672251

9. EXTERNAL REPORTING

9.1 This policy is intended to provide employees with an avenue to raise concerns within the school. The school hopes that this policy gives employees the reassurance they need to raise concerns internally.

9.2 However, employees have the right to raise concerns directly with external bodies if they reasonably believe:

- Their concern has not been addressed adequately through internal procedures
- They will be victimised if they raise the concern internally
- There is an exceptionally serious matter that requires immediate external reporting
- There is evidence being concealed or destroyed

9.3 Appropriate external bodies for independent schools may include:

For independent schools:

- **The Department for Education** (for serious concerns about independent schools): www.gov.uk/complain-about-school
- **The Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)** (for serious teacher misconduct): misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk

For safeguarding concerns:

- **Hertfordshire Children's Services:** 0300 123 4043
- **Hertfordshire LADO** (Local Authority Designated Officer): LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk or call 0300 123 4043
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline:** 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk
- **The Police** (for criminal matters including child abuse): 999 or 101

For other concerns:

- **Health and Safety Executive** (for serious health and safety concerns): www.hse.gov.uk
- **The Information Commissioner's Office** (for data protection concerns): 0303 123 1113

9.4 Employees may also seek advice from their trade union or professional association, or from the independent charity **Protect** (formerly Public Concern at Work), which provides free, confidential whistleblowing advice:

- Advice line: 020 3117 2520
- Email: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk
- Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk

10. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- Staff Grievance Procedures
- Complaints Policy