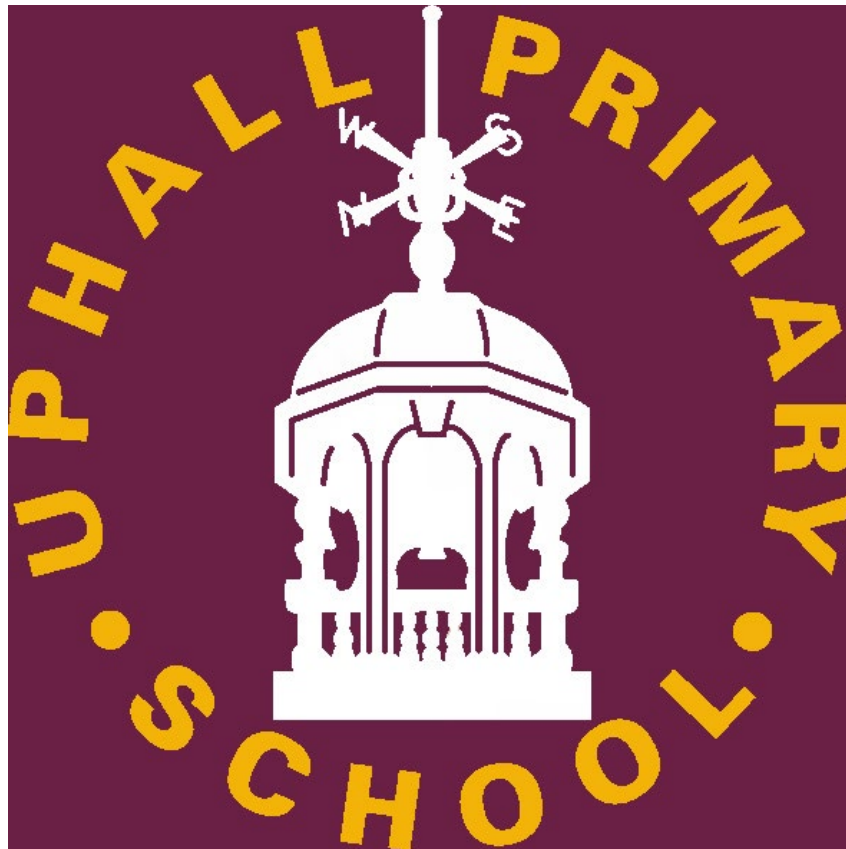


Uphall Primary School Whistle Blowing Policy



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Reviewed By: Governing Body

Chair of Governors/Governing Body

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DATE: _____

Whistle Blowing Policy

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1. Statement of Intention

- 1.1 The Uphall Primary School is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service, including openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment we encourage employees with concerns about any aspect of the School's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is intended that the Whistleblowing Policy enables individuals to raise concerns in a confidential manner and it is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This Policy document makes it clear that individuals can do something without fear of reprisals.
- 1.2 This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within the school rather than ignoring a problem or reporting the matter outside of the school.

2. Aim and Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 The School's Policy aims to:
- Encourage individuals to feel confident about raising a concern in confidence
 - Encourage individuals to question practice and act upon any concern
 - Provide clear channels for raising concerns
 - Ensure individuals receive a response to concerns raised and are clear about how to pursue matters if not satisfied
 - Provide reassurance that individuals will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation when raising a concern in the public interest where they reasonably believe something is wrong.
- 2.2 Under the school's Finance Policy and Procedures and other linked policies, individuals have a duty to raise with their manager any concerns they may have. However, if they feel they are unable to do so, they should use the alternative contact provided within the Whistleblowing Policy. Line managers should be aware of when issues fall under the scope of the Whistleblowing Policy and follow the Whistleblowing procedures.
- 2.3 The Policy applies to all:
- Employees (including trainees and apprentices)
 - Workers (not directly employed by the school) i.e. agency and casual workers
 - Contractors
 - Suppliers
 - Organisations working in partnership with the school
- 2.4 Concerns which would be appropriate to report include the following issues, where they affect or are relevant to Uphall Primary School:
- The abuse of children and /or vulnerable adults (physical or psychological);

- Health and safety risks, either to the public or other employees;
- Any unlawful act (e.g. theft);
- The demonstration of extremist behaviour or suspected of radicalisation
- The unauthorised use of public funds (e.g. expenditure for improper purpose);
- A breach of the Employee Code of Conduct;
- Maladministration (e.g. not adhering to procedures, negligence);
- Failing to safeguard personal and/or sensitive information (data protection);
- Damage to the environment (e.g. pollution);
- Fraud and corruption (e.g. to give or receive any gift/reward as a bribe);

- Abuse of power;
- Poor value for money;
- Other unethical conduct; and
- Any deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above.

3. Issues not covered by the policy

3.1 Issues and complaints from employees in respect of their employment are not within the scope of this Policy and are covered by alternative Council/school policies and procedures, e.g. Grievance. These must be dealt with by contacting the relevant manager within their service in the first instance.

4. Protecting the Whistleblower

4.1 The Policy has been written in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998, which protects whistleblowers from reprisals as long as they meet the rules set out in the Act. The main features are:

- Workers have the right not to be victimised or dismissed as a result of a disclosure which is protected by the Act;
- Protection provided by the Act is not subject to any qualifying period of employment;
- Where a whistleblower is victimised as a result of their whistleblowing, they can bring a claim at an employment tribunal for compensation. Awards are based on losses suffered and are unlimited;
- A disclosure will not qualify for protection unless it is made in the public interest and tend to show one or more number of issues listed above;
- The term "workers" relates to employees, including trainees and apprentices. This also extends to workers not directly employed by the school (i.e. contractors, agency workers and casual workers).

4.2 The school has made clear its commitment to the Whistleblowing Policy at all levels.

4.3 If however, individuals raise malicious unfounded concerns, attempt to make mischief or personal gain, this will also be taken seriously and

may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Council's/school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

5. Anonymity and Confidentiality

5.1 All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the whistleblower if they so wish, unless a disclosure is required by law.

5.2 The best way to raise a concern is to do so openly. Individuals are encouraged to provide their details when raising a concern. Openness

makes it easier for the school to investigate the matter and obtain further information.

5.3 Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but they may be considered at the discretion of the school. In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issue raised;
- The credibility of the concern; and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources.

IMPORTANT

- ❖ Uphall Primary School will respect the confidentiality of the **whistleblower**.
- ❖ **Whistleblower** is protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1999 and gives a “worker” the right not to be victimised or dismissed because he or she has made a protected disclosure.

6. How to raise an issue

Uphall Primary School encourages the *whistleblower* to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and give an explanation for the behaviour or activity.

Uphall Primary School has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the whistleblower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Name & Position

Headteacher
Chair of Governors

Contact details

At the school
Through the school

The *whistleblower* may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in written form marked private and confidential and addressed to one of the above named individuals. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible.

Alternatively if the *whistleblower* considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise within the internal environment of the school, the matter should be directed in the first instance to:

Chief Executive	82100
Corporate Director of Resources	83588
S151 Officer	83013
Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer)	82201
Head of Audit	83130

- 6.1 Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Contact can be made in confidence on 0800 633 5267 or e-mail whistleblow@redbridge.gov.uk.
- 6.3 Individuals may also seek guidance on whistleblowing from their Union or Professional. Additional information can also be obtained from the whistleblowing charity [Public Concern at Work](#) and the [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(ACAS\)](#).
- 6.4 Once a whistleblower has reported the matter, it will be assigned to an appropriate officer/staff to investigate, in order to demonstrate whether there are sufficient grounds for concern. In some cases, the whistleblower may be asked to provide evidence as a witness. If a whistleblower declines to be a witness, it may not be possible to pursue an investigation if it is not possible to gain sufficient evidence from other sources.

7.0 How will the matter be progressed?

The individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation (the investigating officer(s)) will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of school staff, legal or personnel advisors, the police and the LA.

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigating officer(s), possibly in conjunction with the Governing Body, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third party referral such as the police.

The *whistleblower* will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation

and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the Governing Body and the LA.

The LA has its own procedures for dealing with such matters and will ensure every effort to respect the confidentiality of the *whistleblower*. If the whistleblower is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation, Uphall Primary School would prefer

that the whistleblower raised this with them or the LA, explaining why this is the case. The concern will be looked at again if there is good reason to do so.

If the *whistleblower* is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the investigating officer(s), the Governing Body and/or directed to the LA.

8.0 Raising unfounded malicious concerns

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances.

9.0 Conclusion

Existing good practice within Uphall Primary School in terms of its systems of internal control both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the school operates ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur. This whistleblowing policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the school. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.

10. Linked policies and procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Finance Policy and Procedures – including the E-Purchase Card Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality and Pecuniary Interest Policy
- IT related policies
- School Complaints Policy.