Archbishop Temple
Church of England
Multi Academy Trust
Together With God

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Multi Academy Trust. **Normally, employees would be expected to raise any concerns initially with their Principal.** However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the school. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

1.2 The school is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the school's activities or those who work for the school, to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

1.3 This policy document makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the school rather than overlooking a problem or "*blowing the whistle*" outside.

1.4 The policy applies to all employees and those contractors working for the school-on-school premises, for example, agency staff, builders and drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the School or Children's Services on their own premises, for example, sure start, or in other premises where services are delivered.

1.5 These procedures are in addition to the school's complaints procedures and other statutory reporting procedures applying to the school. You are responsible for making service users aware of the existence of these procedures.

1.6 This policy has been discussed with the relevant trade unions and has their support.

2. AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

2.1 This policy aims to:

- Encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice;
- Provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied;

- Reassure you that you will be protected by the school from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith.

2.2 The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside, or in a particular instance do not appear to have been properly addressed within, the scope of other procedures. These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law, including breaches of the School's Valuing Diversity Policy;
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice;
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees;
- Damage to the environment;
- The unauthorised use of public funds;
- Possible fraud and corruption;
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual or physical abuse of clients, or
- Child Protection concerns
- Other unethical conduct.

It is important to note there is a Grievance Procedure in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment.

2.3 Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of the school's provision or the conduct of colleagues/employees of the school or members of the Trustees or Governing Body, or others acting on behalf of the school can be reported under the Whistleblowing Policy. This may be about something that:

- Makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe the school subscribes to;
- Is against the school's standing orders and policies;
- Falls below established standards of practice;
- Amounts to improper conduct.

2.4 This policy does not replace the school's complaints procedure.

3. SAFEGUARDS - HARASSMENT OR VICTIMISATION

3.1 The school is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees.

3.2 The school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make especially for staff who are new to the school. If what you are saying is true, or your suspicions are reasonable, you will have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and to those for whom you are providing a service. In fact, you may be making yourself vulnerable if you do not raise the alarm.

3.3 **The school will not tolerate or allow any form of harassment, victimisation or discrimination (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith**. **If there are any intimidatory threats or instances of harassment/victimisation/discrimination against a 'whistleblower' the school will take appropriate disciplinary action against the individual(s) concerned.**

3.4 Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect you.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

4.1 All concerns will be treated, as far as possible, in the strictest confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. However, if your concerns require any further action, you may at some future date have to act as a witness and/or provide evidence.

5. ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

5.1 This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.

5.2 Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the school.

5.3 In exercising this 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.

6. UNTRUE ALLEGATIONS

6.1 If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

7. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

7.1 As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with the **Principal**. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that the Principal is involved, you should approach **Mr John Waring (Trustee)** at his email address
7.2 **(waringj@archbishoptempletrust.co.uk)** in the first instance who may, depending on the circumstances, have to liaise with the Department of Education (DfE).

7.3 Concerns should be raised in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are invited to use the attached Form P11 at Appendix 1 which enables you to identify:

- The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
- The reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

7.4 The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take action.

7.5 Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

7.6 Advice/guidance on how to pursue matters of concern may be obtained from:

- Department of Education
- HR Children's Services
- The Principal
- A nominated person – Mr John Waring (Trustee)

7.7 You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague or your Trade Union Representative, if appropriate first as you may find it easier to raise the matter through someone you trust.

7.8 You may invite your trade union, or a colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

8. HOW THE SCHOOL WILL RESPOND

8.1 The school will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.

8.2 Where appropriate, the matters raised may:

- Be investigated by appropriate representatives, internal audit, or through the disciplinary process;
- Be referred to the Police;
- Be referred to the external auditor;
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry. *(See Appendix 2)*
- or a combination of these

8.3 In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle which the school will have in mind is the public interest. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, child protection, adult abuse or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under these procedures.

8.4 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

8.5 Within **ten** working days of a concern being raised, HR Children's Services will write to you in confidence:

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- Indicating how we propose to deal with the matter;
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- Telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made;

- Supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms, and
- Telling you whether further investigation will take place and if not, why not.

Every effort will be made to ensure that your concerns are dealt with as speedily as possible and you are kept informed of progress made.

8.6 The amount of contact between the officers considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the school will seek further information from you.

8.7 Where any meeting is arranged, off-site if you so wish, you can be accompanied by a trade union representative or a colleague.

8.8 The school will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings the school will arrange for you to receive advice about the procedure.

8.9 The school accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, we will inform you of the outcome of any investigation.

9. THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

9.1 The Principal/Nominated Trustee has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this Policy. He/she will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes (but in a form which does not endanger your confidentiality) and will report as necessary to the school.

10. HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

10.1 This Policy is intended to provide you with an avenue within the school to raise concerns. The school hopes you will be satisfied with any action taken. If you are not, and if you feel it is right to take the matter outside the school, the following are possible contact points, *(this list is not exhaustive)*:

- The Department of Education
- The Health and Safety Executive

- The Financial Services Authority
- H M Customs and Excise
- The Inland Revenue
- The Police
- The District Auditor
- The Ombudsman

10.2 If you do take the matter outside the school, you should ensure that you do not disclose confidential information. Check with the Department of Education before disclosing any information.

Reviewed: June 26

Next Review: June 2027

APPENDIX 1

_____ School

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

FORM PI1

Class/faculty

WHAT CONCERN(S) DO YOU WISH TO RAISE?

(In your own words describe your concern(s), include date(s), time(s), persons involved, including any witnesses, location, the length of time you have been concerned.)

WHY ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE ISSUE(S)?

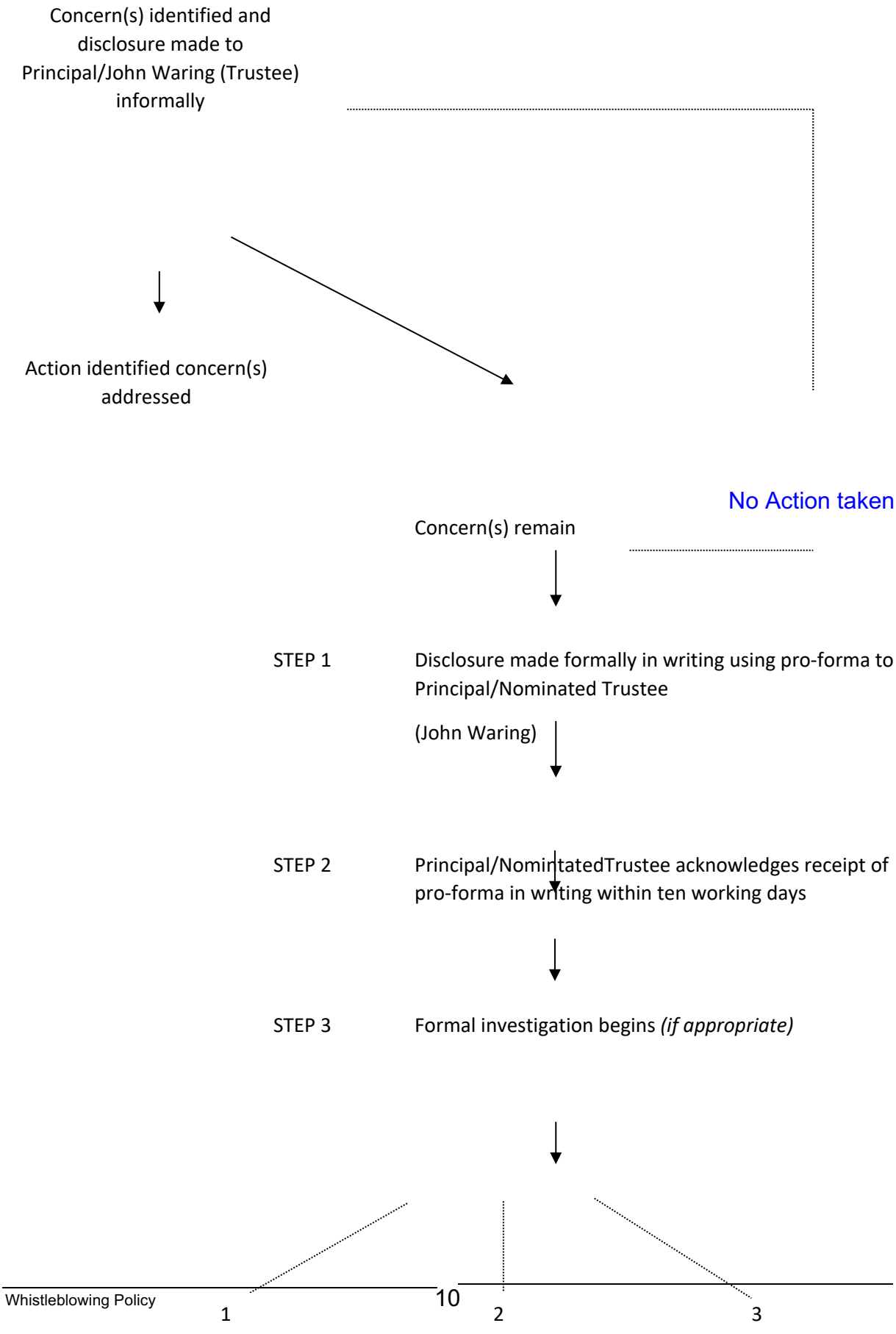
HAVE YOU DISCUSSED THE ISSUE(S) WITH ANYONE ELSE? YES/NO

IF SO, who with WHEN (*date*)

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME OF THIS PREVIOUS DISCUSSION?

SIGNED ..... DATE .....

ON COMPLETION THIS FORM SHOULD BE SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL/NOMINATED TRUSTEE JOHN WARING IN A SEALED ENVELOPE MARKED PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

APPENDIX 2

STEPS IN MAKING A DISCLOSURE