Oak Bank School

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Prepared by: Peter Cohen & Sally Hall

Designated safeguarding officers: Rachael Freer, Peter Cohen

Date: February 2013

Review and Amendment						
By	PC	PC	PC			
Date	06/02/14	03/02/15	22/03/17			
Signed						
Governor	MR	JJ	JJ			
Date						
Signed						

This guidance is written for the staff, governors, volunteers, parents and carers of Oak Bank School in line with the LSCB guidance and Ofsted's whistle blowing procedures.

Oak Bank School recognises its' responsibility to safeguard its' pupils from harm and that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

Rationale

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Designated Senior Leader for Safeguarding (DSL) or the Head Teacher. Although this can be difficult, this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues, or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember, it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Reasons for whistle blowing

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

What stops people from whistle blowing?

- 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

Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right

Staff will receive training in safeguarding children and young people and whistle blowing procedures on an annual basis. Further information can be found in "Safer Working Practices for Adults who Work with Children and Young People" – DCSF 2009

How to raise a concern

- Voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. 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
- Approach the DSL or Head Teacher
- If your concern is about the DSL or Head Teacher, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest
- Ideally you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where possible.
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What Happens next?

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 their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member 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.

Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager, HR department and trade union.

> "Absolutely without fail – challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong"
> *"Sounding The Alarm" - Barnardos*