

Hightown Junior Infant and Nursery School

At Hightown we work together as a school community with pride, respect, rigour and fairness. We celebrate effort, respond enthusiastically to challenges and create positive opportunities that enable everyone to achieve in every way.

Whistle Blowing policy

Policy date:	March 2026	
Approved by & date	Full Governing Body	March 2026
Link school staff:	Russell Ingleby	
Link governor:	Barry Lockwood	
Next review date	January 2027	

INDEPENDENT REPORTING OF CONCERNS AT WORK

Introduction

Our employees will often be the first to notice if there is something seriously wrong within their workplace. Sometimes it may seem difficult to speak up because of feelings of disloyalty, or because of a fear of harassment or victimization.

We expect the highest standards of behaviour, and all employees have a responsibility to voice any concerns they have, normally with their line manager or Head Teacher.

This Whistleblowing policy is independent and confidential. It can be anonymous if you wish. We will make sure that you will not be victimized or suffer disadvantage if you report your genuine concerns.

It allows employees to bring to the attention of those who can make a difference any practice which they believe or suspect:

- is unlawful
- is a serious breach of the council's policies, procedures and rules (for example, the Contract Procedure rules)
- falls substantially below established standards of practice
- amounts to improper conduct

It is difficult to come up with a complete list of issues which might cause concern, but you should report fraud, corruption or financial irregularities; the physical, mental or sexual abuse of clients; unfair discrimination; abuse of power; dangerous practices; criminal conduct; serious damage to the environment; negligence; unprofessional behaviour and evasion of statutory responsibilities.

The malpractice might be carried out by council employees, contractors, consultants, or councilors.

This procedure is not to be used if you are generally dissatisfied at work or as a replacement to your existing employment rights with the council. If you make any allegations maliciously or for personal gain, you may be disciplined.

What is a whistleblower?

You're a whistleblower if you're a worker and you report certain types of wrongdoing. This will usually be something you've seen at work - though not always.

The wrongdoing you disclose must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others, eg the general public.

As a whistleblower you're protected by law - you shouldn't be treated unfairly or lose your job because you 'blow the whistle'.

You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now or you believe will happen in the near future.

Who is protected by law

You're protected if you're a worker, e.g. you're:

- an employee, such as a teacher, support staff, caterer or cleaner
- a trainee, such as a student teacher
- an agency worker
- a member of a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)

Get independent advice if you're not sure you're protected, eg from Citizens' Advice.

A confidentiality clause or 'gagging clause' in a settlement agreement isn't valid if you're a whistleblower.

Complaints that count as whistleblowing

You're protected by law if you report any of the following:

- a criminal offence, eg fraud
- someone's health and safety is in danger
- risk or actual damage to the environment
- a miscarriage of justice
- the company is breaking the law, eg doesn't have the right insurance
- you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing
- A child or children are at risk of harm

Complaints that don't count as whistleblowing

Personal grievances (e.g. bullying, harassment, discrimination) aren't covered by whistleblowing law, unless your particular case is in the public interest. Report these under your employer's grievance policy.

How to raise a concern

a) **Through your line manager**

Normally you should first speak to your immediate manager. But if you feel that you can't do this – for example if you believe that they are involved – then you should speak to your Head Teacher or subsequently chair of governors. You may find it helpful at this stage to contact your trade union representative.

b) **Through the Whistleblowing route**

If you do not feel able to contact any of these people you should call the council's Whistleblowing answerphone – ring **01484 225030** or email whistleblowing@kirklees.gov.uk

You should give as much information as you can, including names, dates, places, history and why you are concerned. You are encouraged, but not required, to leave your name and contact details – it is much easier to investigate a concern if we can speak to you directly and confidentially.

All messages on the answerphone and email will be heard and seen only by the council's Corporate Customer Standards team. They will then review all messages confidentially, and contact either the Head of Audit and Risk or the Head of HR.

How your concerns will be dealt with

All allegations will be investigated: how and by whom depends on how serious they are and who they involve. The investigation may be handled internally or referred to an external agency such as the police or councils external auditor.

If you raise your concerns under this policy then we will write to you within 10 working days saying:

- what we intend to do
- how long we think this will take
- whether any more information is required from you

We will let you know the outcome of the investigation, so that you can see that the matter has been properly addressed.

Corporate Governance and Audit will receive regular reports summarising all concerns raised under this policy.

Raising your concerns elsewhere

This Whistleblowing policy has been drawn up so that you can have your concerns dealt with properly, independently and confidentially by the council. But if you have no faith in this process, then you may consider contacting:

- the police – phone 101 from any phone (9 then 101 from council phones)
- the council's external auditor:
    - KPMG,1 The Embankment, Leeds LS1 4DW, (0113 231 3000)
- Public Concern at Work – an independent authority on whistleblowing at www.pcaw.co.uk or phone 020 7404 6609
- There are a number of other organisations to which Whistleblowing concerns may be raised without any breech of the statutory guidelines and with whom you retain full protection of you are a protected person see *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-peopleand-bodies–2*

Council employees have a responsibility not to undertake any action which might bring the council into disrepute. If you do decide to report your concerns outside the council, you must ensure that you have a good reason for doing so and you must not disclose confidential information.