

Chew Stoke Out of School Club

Whistleblowing Policy

Rationale

Chew Stoke Out of School Club (CSOOSC) is required to have a whistleblowing policy to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. It is intended that this policy will encourage and enable participants to raise serious concerns and provide a framework for the management of the issues raised.

It is not intended that this policy is used when CSOOSC's complaints procedure would be more appropriate. This policy forms part of CSOOSC's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Aims

The whistle blowing policy is intended to:

- encourage employees and others who have serious concerns about any aspect of CSOOSC's work to voice them;
- recognise that certain cases have to proceed on a confidential basis;
- enable participation without fear of reprisals, victimisation or discrimination; and
- enable employees, and others, to raise serious concerns within CSOOSC rather than overlook a problem.

Roles and Responsibilities

The trustees and management of CSOOSC has overall responsibility for ensuring the whistleblowing policy is managed appropriately in accordance with agreed procedure.

The Manager is responsible for making sure staff are aware of the existence of this policy. The Manager is responsible for maintaining a record of concerns raised and outcomes in a form, which does not endanger confidentiality.

Staff are responsible for making themselves familiar with and complying with this policy.

Policy

CSOOSC recognises that staff, and others associated with the school, are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel this may be disloyal to their colleagues or CSOOSC. They may also fear harassment or victimisation.

CSOOSC is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment CSOOSC expects employees, and others that are involved with the Club, who have serious concerns to come forward and voice those concerns. Whistle blowing, enabled by this policy, provides a structured way for this important information to come to light. It also aims to reassure those raising concerns that they will be protected from



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possible reprisals or victimisation if they have reasonable belief and have made any disclosures in good faith.

The policy applies to all staff, trustees, contractors, agencies and partners. The board of trustees of CSOOSC encourage participants to use this policy and the procedure it describes to voice their concerns if and when they become aware of activity which they believe to be dangerous, illegal, unethical, or in any other way seriously detrimental to the children or the school. These are some example of activities which might cause concern:

CSOOSC encourages participants to put their name to any matter raised under this policy, as it often helps the investigation if those in authority are able to clarify information with the person who initiates the procedure, and formal statements do help to build a case and add credibility to allegations. However, CSOOSC will respect the confidentiality of anyone raising a concern and will do everything in its power to protect their identity. If the person raising the concern wishes to do so anonymously, CSOOSC will respect the wishes of the initiator, and will only attempt to contact them if the investigation is being hampered by lack of evidence.

Safeguards against harassment

CSOOSC recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for malpractice. CSOOSC will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect anyone raising a concern in good faith.

If an employee is the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures when they raise their concerns, then those procedures will not automatically be affected. The information provided would be assessed in the light of the new circumstances and a decision taken as to how, if at all, those proceedings should be affected.

Untrue allegations

When an allegation is made in good faith, but is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the person voicing the concern. If, however, a deliberately malicious or vexatious allegation is deemed to have been made, disciplinary action may be taken.

Raising a Concern

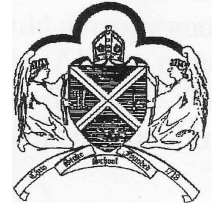
CSOOSC staff should initially raise concerns with their line manager, or in the event of the concern involving their line manager one of the trustees.

Trustees should raise concerns with the Chair of Trustees.

Outside agencies and partners should raise concerns with their appropriate senior manager or director.

It may be that the nature of the concern would suggest another body as most appropriate, for example if it were to involve CSOOSC Manager. Suggestions for alternative contacts include:

- B&NES Council Head of Human Resources; (01225 477000)
- the Diocese of Bath and Wells;(01749 670777)



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- the relevant Union.

For additional suggestions please see the further action section.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. It would be helpful for the information provided to include the background and history of the concern and the reason why the individual is particularly concerned about the situation.

The earlier concerns are expressed the easier it is to take action.

Although the complainant is not expected to prove the truth of the allegation they should be able to demonstrate reasonable grounds for concern.

How CSOOSC will respond

Initial handling

It is not possible to be prescriptive in advance about how to deal with concerns raised, as the nature of the concern will to some extent drive the investigation and decision-making. However, these guidelines should be used in all cases handled by CSOOSC.

As soon as possible after a concern has been raised (normally within 10 working days) CSOOSC should write to the individual concerned to acknowledge the issue that has been raised and to indicate what will happen next.

Concerns or allegations which fall under the scope of specific policies, such as allegations of child abuse, shall be referred for consideration under those policies.

The person leading the enquiry (e.g. Manager or Chair of trustees) should consider appointing a committee of suitably qualified staff and/or trustees to conduct an initial enquiry. The purpose of the initial enquiry is to protect individuals and CSOOSC, and to help the person leading the enquiry to decide whether an internal investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. It is not intended that this initial enquiry will attempt to get to the bottom of the matter; its sole purpose is to advise the person leading the enquiry what action should be taken. Therefore, the committee should avoid moving beyond this limited initial brief and starting an in-depth internal investigation.

If it is obvious, without the need for this initial enquiry what action should be taken, then this stage may be omitted, such as child protection allegations.

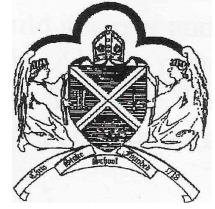
The committee shall record in writing their actions, and any evidence that comes to light.

The committee shall exercise appropriate discretion when conducting their enquiries.

The committee shall report back to the person leading the enquiry and recommend how the case should be handled.

The action taken by CSOOSC will depend on the nature of the concern and overriding externally applied procedures. The matters raised may be:

- Resolved without the need for investigation;



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- Investigated internally;
- Referred to the police;
- Referred to the external auditor; or
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry.

After receiving the report from the committee, the person leading the enquiry shall decide how the matter should be dealt with, and shall record their decision and reasons in writing, informing all appropriate stakeholders.

Internal Investigations

If it is deemed that the matter is best dealt with by an internal investigation, the person leading the enquiry shall appoint a panel to investigate the matter. The panel:

- Should consist of no fewer than three people, one of whom shall be appointed as chair;
- Shall be made up of staff, trustees and/or other persons co-opted for the purpose;
- Shall be made up of people who have no interest in the matter;
- Shall be given a written brief which shall:
 - Identify the concern or allegation;
 - Include specific terms of reference for the panel which are measurable, agreed with the panel members, realistic, and with defined timescales;
 - Specify what output from the investigation is expected (normally this would include the requirement to produce a written report with recommendations);
 - Define the scope and limitations of the investigation; and
 - Include guidance on aspects of confidentiality.

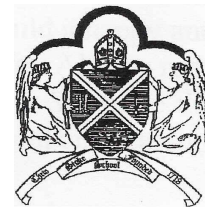
The amount of contact between the individual raising the concern and those considering the issue will depend on the nature of the matters raised. The individual may be approached to provide further information.

If a meeting is arranged then the individual concerned has the right to be accompanied by an appropriate person; this could be a trade union representative, a friend or some other person of their choice.

Other than cases raised by a person anonymously, CSOOSC, subject to legal constraints, will inform the initiator in writing about the outcome of any investigations.

Further Action

This policy is intended as an avenue for individuals to raise concerns within CSOOSC. The objective will be to investigate reported concerns to the satisfaction of all parties. However, if it becomes clear that the matter cannot satisfactorily be dealt with internally, any investigation



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underway should stop immediately, and the matter should be referred to the appropriate external agency. If the person raising the concern is not satisfied with the internal investigation, they are encouraged to refer the matter to the appropriate external agency.

This policy is intended to deal with matters within CSOOSC's area of influence. It might be that concerns are raised that are beyond the scope of the policy, or the outcome is not to the satisfaction of the person raising the concern. In these cases, the person raising the concern may wish to take the matter up with an external agency, such as:

- the Parochial Church Council for the Parish of Chew Stoke and Nempnett Thrubwell; (01225 332947)
- the Diocese of Bath and Wells; (01749 670777)
- the B&NES Director of Children's Services; (01225 477000)
- the Member of Parliament; at time of writing Jacob Rees-Mogg (0207 219 7118)
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools; (0370 000 2288)
- the Department for Education (0370 000 2288)
- the External Auditor;
- the Health and Safety Executive; (0300 003 1747)
- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations;
- a solicitor; or
- the Police (101).

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

CSOOSC trustees shall monitor and evaluate concerns raised under this policy annually and review this policy every two years.