



# ASTON FIELDS MIDDLE SCHOOL

## WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Review date: September 2024

Cycle: 1 year

Next review date: September 2025



## **Commitment to Equality**

At Aston Fields Middle School, we are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any forms of harassment, bullying or victimisation.

This Whistleblowing policy has been approved and adopted by Aston Fields Middle School and will be reviewed in Autumn 2025.

Signed by Chair of Governors (Aston Fields Middle School):

Signed by Headteacher (Aston Fields Middle School):

## **Definitions**

In this Whistleblowing policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- a. 'Chair' means the Chair of the Governing Body as appointed from time to time.
- b. 'Clerk' means the Clerk to the Governing Body as appointed from time to time.
- c. 'Governor' means, the representatives appointed or elected to the Local Governing Body, from time to time.
- d. 'Headteacher' means, the most senior teacher in the school who is responsible for its management and administration.
- e. 'Governing Body' means, the representatives appointed and elected to carry out specified functions in relation to the School.
- f. 'Teacher' means a teacher employed by Aston Fields Middle School to work at the school and, where the context so admits, includes the Headteacher.
- g. 'Working week' means, any week that you would ordinarily work.

## **1. Application**

This Whistleblowing policy applies to you if you are an employee or worker of Aston Fields Middle School.

## **2. Scope**

**2.1 Whistleblowing is the disclosure by staff of what they consider to be malpractice by a co-worker or manager.** This malpractice may constitute any behaviour felt to be detrimental to the best interests of the school, its stakeholders and its employees. Specific examples of issues covered by the Whistleblowing policy include:

- 2.1(a) Any unlawful act.
- 2.1(b) Failure to comply with any legal obligations or regulatory requirements.
- 2.1(c) Health and safety issues.
- 2.1(d) Damage to the environment.
- 2.1(e) Unauthorised use of public funds, to include financial fraud or mismanagement.
- 2.1(f) Fraud and corruption of any description
- 2.1(g) Inappropriate or improper conduct (including bullying or harassment).
- 2.1(h) Serious failure to comply with appropriate professional standards.
- 2.1(i) Breach of the Aston Fields Middle School Code of Conduct or other policy.
- 2.1(j) Discrimination of any kind.



2.1(k) Any form of unethical conduct, including unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.

2.2 A whistle blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or changes affecting any of these activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy.

2.3 The Whistleblowing policy does not apply to raising grievances about an employee's personal situation with work. Any such concerns should be raised under the existing provisions for raising grievances.

2.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

2.5 Provided that you act in good faith, and that you have a reasonable suspicion that the alleged malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur, you can disclose your concerns, using procedure, and be protected by law from victimisation or dismissal.

The law in question is the Public Interest Disclosure Act, which came into force in 1999.

Although not strictly required by the Act, Aston Fields Middle School's internal procedures give effect to it. The school believes that having internal procedures is in everyone's interest.

2.6 If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy, you should seek advice from the Headteacher whose contact details are at the end of this policy.

### **3. Aims of the policy**

3.1 The aims of the school's Whistleblowing Policy are as follows:

3.1(a) Encourage employees to feel confident about raising concerns and to question and act on those concerns;

3.1(b) Provide ways for staff to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken as a result;

3.1(c) Reassure staff that if they raise concerns in good faith and reasonably believe them to be true, they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation;

3.1(d) Ensure that employees are aware of options available to them if they are dissatisfied with the school's initial response.

### **4. Who is covered by the policy?**

4.1 The school's Whistleblowing policy applies equally to all of the following groups:

4.1(a) All employees (including part time and temporary staff);

4.1(b) Officers;



- 4.1(c) Agency staff working for a school;
- 4.1(d) Consultants;
- 4.1(e) Contractors and suppliers;
- 4.1(f) Volunteers;
- 4.1(g) Organisations working with a school under partnership arrangements;
- 4.1(h) Service users and stakeholders

## **5. What assurance does the Whistleblowing policy provide?**

**5.1** Individuals raising concerns under the Whistleblowing policy will not be at risk of any form of retribution or sanction, including losing their job or contract with the school provided that:

- 5.1(a) The disclosure is made in good faith, and;
- 5.1(b) There is a genuine and reasonable belief that the information, and any allegations contained in it, is substantially true, and;
- 5.1(c) The disclosure is not motivated by personal gain.
- 5.1(d) The school will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, where matters that are known to be untrue are raised maliciously, it is likely that disciplinary action will be taken against perpetrators.

## **6. Making a disclosure/ Raising a concern**

**6.1** The school has established the following primary mechanisms for staff to report their concerns:

- 6.1(a) To make a disclosure, either telephone or write to the Headteacher. If writing, mark the envelope: 'Strictly Private and Confidential'. **Do not email the Headteacher**, as email is not a secure medium and must not be used.
- 6.1(b) The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of your disclosure in writing, within 5 working days. They will also gather further information if need be, including by personal interview, at which you can be accompanied by an official of your trade union or professional association, or by a fellow colleague. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.
- 6.1(c) Lines of communication for reporting fraud are the same as above
- 6.1(d) Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing;
- 6.1(e) Whilst anonymous allegations will be considered and action taken where appropriate, it is much more difficult to properly investigate matters raised anonymously. The Whistleblowing Policy is designed to protect staff raising genuinely held concerns and individuals utilising the provisions of the policy are encouraged to identify themselves. Obviously, feedback (where appropriate) relating to any investigation that has been undertaken can only be provided where contact details are known.

**6.2** Reports concerning the Headteacher's conduct should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors following the mechanisms laid out in 6.1

## **7. Confidentiality**



**7.1** The school will treat your disclosure in confidence and only reveal your identity if absolutely necessary (e.g. if required in connection with legal action).

## **8. How will the school respond?**

**8.1** The school's response will depend on the nature of the concern that has been raised.

**8.2** In all instances, the school will:

8.2(a) Record and acknowledge the issue raised and refer it for investigation within five working days of receiving the information.

8.2(b) Respect confidentiality. The school will do its best to protect identity when you raise a concern and do not want your name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated, however, that this is not always possible. The investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence. The person investigating this matter will be informed of any confidentiality requirements relating to the disclosure;

8.2(c) Decide on appropriate action e.g. Audit Services investigation, other internal investigation, and referral to the police or other external organisation;

8.2(d) Subject to any legal constraints, the relevant employee will normally be informed of the final outcome of any investigation undertaken.

8.2(e) Safeguarding issues will be reported to the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Board through the Local Authority Designated Officer.

## **9. Contact details**

The Headteacher can be contacted at the address below:

Mrs A Hales  
Headteacher  
Aston Fields Middle School  
Drummond Road  
Aston Fields  
Bromsgrove  
Worcestershire  
B60 2ET  
Telephone: 01527 876026

## **10. How can a concern be taken further?**

Where individuals are dissatisfied with action taken by the school in respect of issues raised under the Whistleblowing Policy, they should raise their concerns with The Chair of Governors, Aston Fields Middle School, Drummond Road, Aston Fields, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 2ET. If they remain dissatisfied, the following organisations may be contacted for advice:

1. Worcestershire County Council  
County Hall



Spetchley Road  
Worcester  
WR5 2NP  
Telephone: 01905 763763

2. The National Audit Office  
Whistleblowing hotline  
Telephone: 02077987999  
Email: [enquiries@nao.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@nao.gsi.gov.uk)
  
3. The Charity 'Project'  
Protect  
CAN Mezzanine  
7-14 Great Dover Street  
London  
SE1 4YR  
Telephone: 02031172520  
Email: [whistle@protet-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protet-advice.org.uk)
  
4. Secretary of State for Education  
Secretary of State  
Department for Education  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD