



ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL
*To lead those in our care to grow in their faith
and to benefit from an enriching education*

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Rationale

The Staff and Governors of St Thomas More School seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. They recognise their accountability for public funds and the duty of probability and acumen owed to the collective community and the wider public. In the event that members of school staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of any relevant activities which give cause for concern, the governors of St Thomas More School have established the following whistleblowing policy, or code of practice, which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Throughout this policy, the term *whistleblower* denotes the person raising the concern or making the complaint. It is not meant in a pejorative sense and is entirely consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the *Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies* published in May 1996.

The governors of St Thomas More Catholic School are committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. They recognise that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and have therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the school.

The governors of St Thomas More School are committed to creating a climate of trust and openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved.

The provisions of this policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety and not matters of more general grievance, which would be dealt with under the St Thomas More Schools' grievance procedure.

When might the whistleblowing policy apply?

The type of activity or behaviour, which St Thomas More School considers should be dealt with under this policy, includes:

- manipulation of accounting records and finances
- inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- decision-making for personal gain
- any criminal activity
- abuse of position e.g. bullying of staff or students
- fraud and deceit

- serious breaches of school procedures which may advantage a particular party (for example tampering with tender documentation, failure to register a personal interest)
- concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices.
- any activity which may be contrary to Church teachings or not in kilter with existing policies.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

What action should the *whistleblower* take?

The governors of St Thomas More School encourage the *whistleblower* to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and give an explanation for the behaviour or activity.

The governors of St Thomas More School have designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the *whistleblower* is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Name&/or Position

Contact Details

Mr M Tissot

c/o St Thomas More School

Mr Rowland

c/o St Thomas More School

Ms Warriner

c/o St Thomas More School

**Chairman of Governors (Trust Board Representative)
Director of Education**

**c/o St Thomas More School
Westminster Diocese**

The *whistleblower* may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in written form marked private and confidential and addressed to one of the above named individuals. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible. All those named have a responsibility to act on the concerns raised. Failure to do so in accordance with internal procedures may lead to disciplinary action.

Alternatively, if the *whistleblower* considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise within the internal environment of the school, the matter should be directed in the first instance to the Director of Education at the Diocese of Westminster.

How will the matter be progressed?

The individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation (the investigating officer(s) appointed by the Headteacher or Chairman of Governors) will carry out a preliminary investigation in a timely fashion. When a concern is raised, either verbally or in writing, the *whistleblower* will be sent an acknowledgment. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of school staff, the school's external auditors, legal or personnel advisors, the police, the Department of Education, the London Borough of Haringey, the EFA (Education Funding Agency) and the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigating officer(s), possibly in conjunction with the governing body, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of standard setting or disciplinary action, suspension from duties or third-party referral such as to the police. These sanctions are not exhaustive.

The *whistleblower* will be informed of the results of the investigation promptly. This will be after investigations have concluded and action has been taken to address the matter. Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the governing body and the Westminster Diocese.

If the *whistleblower* is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the investigating officer(s), the governing body and/or directed to the Diocese.

Respecting Confidentiality

Wherever possible The governors of St Thomas More School seek to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the *whistleblower* and will, as far as possible, protect him/her from reprisals. The governors of St Thomas More School will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the *whistleblower* or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

Raising unfounded malicious concerns

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious unfounded concerns or attempts to make mischief (eg in a way that breaches the implied duty of trust and confidence between an employer and employee), this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances.

Conclusion

Existing good practice within St Thomas More School in term of its systems of internal control, both financial and non-financial, and the external regulatory environment in which the school operates ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur. This whistleblowing policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the school. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

This policy was agreed on 1 December 2015

This policy was ratified by the Full Governing Body on 27 June 2017

This policy was reviewed by the Full Governing Body on 26 June 2018

This policy was reviewed by the Full Governing Body 10 December 2019

St Thomas More Catholic School is part of The Cardinal Hume Academies Trust