



Our Lady and All Saints

Catholic Multi Academy Company

Strong in Faith

Whistleblowing Policy

Ratified by:	Board of Directors
Date ratified:	10 th July 2024
Name of originator/author:	CFOO
Date issued:	11 th July 2024
Review date:	July 2025

Commitment to Equality:

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these. policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

DEFINITIONS

In this Whistle Blowing Policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- I. 'Our Lady and All Saints Catholic Multi Academy Company' means the MAC named at the beginning of this Policy and includes all sites upon which the MAC undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- II. 'Our Lady and All Saints Catholic Multi Academy Company' means the company responsible for the management of the MAC and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the MAC.
- III. 'Board' means the Board of Directors of the MAC.
- IV. 'Chair' means the Chair of the Board as appointed from time to time.
- V. 'Clerk' means the Clerk to the Board as appointed from time to time.
- VI. 'Catholic Senior Executive Leader' means the person responsible for performance of all Schools and staff within the Multi Academy Company and is accountable to the Board of Directors.
- VII. 'Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO)' means the person to whom responsibility for the MAC's detailed financial procedures is delegated as outlined in the Academies Financial Handbook.
- VIII. 'Directors' means directors appointed to the Board from time to time.
- IX. 'Governor means, the representatives appointed or elected to the Local Governing Body, from time to time.
- X. 'Headteacher' means the most senior Teacher in the School who is responsible for its management and administration.
- XI. 'Local Governing Body means, (if appropriate to the context), the representatives appointed and elected to carry out specified functions in relation to the School as delegated by the Multi Academy Company.
- XII. 'Teacher' means a teacher employed by the MAC work at the School and, where the context so admits, includes the Headteacher.
- XIII. '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 within Our Lady and All Saints Catholic Multi Academy Company.

2. Scope

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 MAC, individual School, its stakeholders, and its employees. Specific examples of issues covered by the Whistleblowing Policy include:

- Any unlawful act.
- Failure to comply with any legal obligations or regulatory requirements.
- Health and safety issues.
- Damage to the environment.
- Unauthorised use of public funds, to include financial fraud or mismanagement.
- Fraud and corruption of any description.
- Inappropriate or improper conduct (including bullying or harassment).
- Serious failure to comply with appropriate professional standards.
- Breach of the MAC's Constitution or other policy or code of practice.
- Discrimination of any kind.
- Any form of unethical conduct, including unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.

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 our activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy.

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.

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

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 this 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, the MAC's internal procedures give effect to it and the MAC believes that having internal procedures is in everyone's interest.

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

3. Aims of the policy

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

- Encourage employees to feel confident about raising concerns and to question and act on those concerns.
- Provide ways for staff to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken as a result.
- 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.
- Ensure that employees are aware of options available to them if they are dissatisfied with the MAC's initial response.

4. Who is covered by the policy

The MAC's Whistleblowing Policy applies equally to the following groups:

- All employees (including part time and temporary staff).
- Agency staff working for a School.
- Consultants.
- Contractors and suppliers.

- Volunteers.
- Organisations working with a School under partnership arrangements.
- Service users and stakeholders.

5. What assurance does the whistleblowing policy provide

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 MAC, provided that:

- The disclosure is made in good faith.
- There is a genuine and reasonable belief that the information, and any allegations contained in it, is substantially true.
- The disclosure is not motivated by personal gain.

The company 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

The MAC has established the following primary mechanisms for all stakeholders as outlined in Section 4 within this policy to report their concerns:

To make a disclosure either telephone, e-mail or write to the Catholic Senior Executive Leader (CSEL) listed at the end of the policy. If writing, mark the envelope: 'Strictly Private and Confidential'.

The Catholic Senior Executive Leader 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.

Lines of communication for reporting fraud can be found in the Our Lady and All Saints Anti-Fraud Policy.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.

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.

7. Confidentiality

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

How will the MAC respond

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

In all instances, the MAC will:

- Record and acknowledge the issue raised and refer it for investigation within five days of receiving the information.
- Respect confidentiality. The MAC will do its best to protect your 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 the matter will be informed of any confidentiality requirements relating to the disclosure.
- Decide on appropriate action e.g., Audit Services investigation, other internal investigation, and referral to the police or other external organisation.
- Subject to any legal constraints, the relevant employee will normally be informed of the final outcome of any investigation undertaken.

Safeguarding issues will be reported to the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Board.

All whistleblowing disclosures will be reported for monitoring purposes to the Board of Directors Risk and Audit Sub-Committee.

Contact details

The Catholic Senior Executive Leader can be contacted at davisp@olaas.co.uk or via the address below:

Mr Peter Davis,
Catholic Senior Executive Leader/ Accounting Officer
Bethany House
155a Kineton Green Road
Olton,
Solihull,
B92 7EG

How can a concern be taken further

Where individuals are dissatisfied with action taken by the MAC in respect of issues raised under the Whistleblowing Policy, they should raise their concerns with:

The Chair of the Board of Directors,
c/o Bethany House
155a Kineton Green Road
Olton,
Solihull,
B92 7EG

If they remain dissatisfied, the following organisations may be contacted for advice:

1. Director of Schools

Birmingham Diocesan Education Service
Don Bosco House
Coventry Road
Coleshill
Birmingham
B46 3EA
Tel: 01675 464755

2. The National Audit Office

Whistleblowing hotline
Tel: 020 7798 7999
Email: enquiries@nao.gsi.gov.uk

3. The Charity 'Protect' Protect

CAN Mezzanine
7-14 Great Dover Street
London
SE1 4YR
Tel: 020 3117 2520
Email: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk

4. Secretary of State for Education

Secretary of State
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD