



Wittersham Church of England Primary Whistleblowing Policy 2025

We strive to cooperate and work alongside all members of our community to feel valued, nurtured, and empowered as they embark upon their journey to become the very best that God intended. Throughout their voyage of discovery with us, we ensure all children are provided with a rich curriculum and experiences that promote courage and a strong moral purpose underpinned by our Christian values, preparing them to become compassionate citizens within our rural community and the wider world

Revision History

Version	Date	By	Description
V01	October 2019	C.Frost	Reviewed and Updated
V02	October 2021	C. Frost	Reviewed and Updated
V03	October 2023	G. Hawkins	Reviewed and Updated
V04	October 2024	Stella Coulson	Reviewed and Updated
V05	October 2025	Stella Coulson	Reviewed and Updated

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Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Wittersham Church of England Primary School, we are committed to achieving the highest possible standards of probity and integrity in all of our practices.

We recognise that it is important for all staff and those connected with our school to have a safe and trusted way of raising serious concerns about any aspect of our operations. We also acknowledge our obligations under the Public Disclosure Act (1998) to ensure clear mechanisms are in place through which matters of public interest can be raised.

We encourage concerns to be raised internally at the earliest opportunity, rather than disregarded or taken externally. All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate. This may include referral to external agencies if required.

Wherever possible, we will provide feedback on the actions taken or the outcome of a concern. Staff raising a concern will be supported throughout the process and protected from detriment, harassment, or victimisation. In some cases, it may be appropriate for concerns to be raised confidentially or anonymously.

This policy explains:

- How concerns can be raised
- The range of responses the school and Governing Board may take
- The support and protection available to staff

2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all staff, agency workers, volunteers, contractors and others working on the premises of Wittersham Church of England Primary School.

Protect defines whistleblowing as:

“The raising of a concern either within the workplace or externally, about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrongdoing which affects others.”

The procedure provides a way for concerns to be raised about conduct or situations which may be inappropriate, including but not limited to:

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- Conduct which may be unlawful
- Breaches of statutory obligations
- Fraud, corruption, bribery, or misuse of public funds
- Health and safety risks
- Safeguarding or child protection concerns
- Miscarriages of justice
- Unethical or unprofessional conduct
- Failures in service provision
- Failure to have due regard to the Prevent Duty
- Deliberate concealment of information relating to these matters

Concerns about an individual's own employment should be raised through the school's grievance procedures.

Concerns may be raised about the practice of:

- Any member of staff
- Members of the Governing Board
- Volunteers
- Contractors

Concerns can be raised individually or collectively. There is no time limit, but raising issues early helps us respond effectively.

3. Adoption and Review

This procedure was adopted by the Governing Board of Wittersham Church of England Primary School in **October 2025** and supersedes any previous Whistleblowing Policy.

The policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher every two years, or earlier if needed, in consultation with recognised unions.

4. Responsibilities of the School

Wittersham Church of England Primary School and the Governing Board will:

- Foster a culture where staff feel confident in raising concerns
- Ensure all concerns are considered and investigated where necessary
- Provide feedback to staff raising concerns where appropriate
- Make staff aware of how to escalate concerns if dissatisfied

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- Protect staff from detriment or reprisal for raising concerns

5. Responsibilities of Staff

All staff are expected to:

- Raise concerns where there is reasonable suspicion for doing so
- Avoid knowingly raising false or malicious allegations
- Engage with any subsequent investigation or process

6. Trade Union Representation

Staff may seek advice and support from their trade union before raising a concern. They may also be accompanied to meetings by a trade union representative or a workplace colleague not directly involved in the concern.

7. Role of the Governing Board

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy.

The Headteacher, supported by the Governing Board, will:

- Ensure whistleblowing arrangements are implemented and understood
- Provide training as required
- Monitor whistleblowing activity and report annually to the Full Governing Board, including:
 - Number and types of concerns raised
 - Outcomes of investigations
 - Any complaints of victimisation or breaches of confidentiality
 - Feedback on staff awareness and confidence in the process

Reports will not identify individuals.

Procedure

8. Raising a Concern

Concerns should normally be raised with a line manager or the Headteacher. Where this is not appropriate, concerns may be raised with the Chair of Governors.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing and should set out:

- Background and history (with names, dates, places, if possible)
- The reason for concern
- A statement that the matter is being raised under the whistleblowing policy

Staff are not expected to prove their concern but should demonstrate reasonable grounds. Anonymous concerns will be considered at the school's discretion.

9. How the School Will Respond

Concerns will be acknowledged and assessed within 10 working days. Possible actions include:

- Internal investigation or disciplinary process
- Referral to Kent County Council's Internal Audit (for financial irregularities)
- Referral to external auditors, regulatory authorities, police or the Local Authority

Where possible, concerns may be resolved informally. Where investigations are required, staff raising the concern will be kept updated as far as is practicable.

Concerns that are malicious, vexatious, or lacking evidence may not be pursued.

10. Notification of Outcome

Feedback will be provided wherever possible, although there may be limits (e.g. where legal or disciplinary action is ongoing).

11. Escalation

If concerns are not resolved internally, they may be raised externally. Staff are encouraged to use internal procedures first, but appropriate external contacts will be made available (see Appendix 1).

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12. Protection and Support

- Staff raising concerns in good faith will not face detriment, harassment, or victimisation.
- False or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action.
- Confidentiality will be respected wherever possible, although anonymity may limit investigation.
- Staff can access the school's counselling service or seek union/professional body support.

13. Record Keeping

All whistleblowing records will be kept securely and in line with GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018). A central log will be maintained by the Governing Board, summarising concerns, actions, and outcomes.