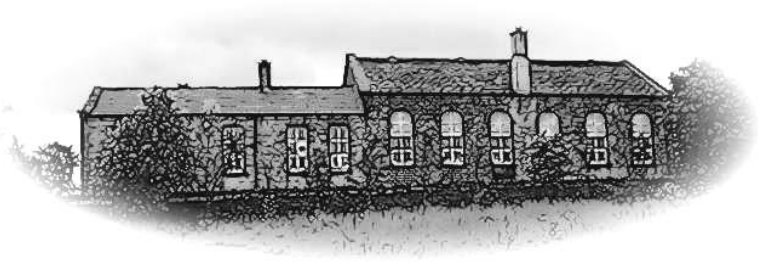
Scapegoat Hill J&I School



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Whistleblowing Policy

Approved by: Governors **Date: September 2026**

Last Reviewed on: September 2026 **Next Review Date: September 2027**

Whistleblowing: Independent Reporting of Concerns at Work
(amended to reflect legislation change 3/26)

1. Introduction

Our employees will often be the first to notice if there is something seriously wrong within their workplace. Sometimes it may seem difficult to speak up because of feelings of disloyalty, or because of a fear of harassment or victimisation.
We expect the highest standards of behaviour and all employees have a responsibility to voice any concerns they have, normally with their manager or assistant director.

This Whistleblowing procedure is independent and confidential. It can be anonymous if you wish. We will make sure that you will not be victimised or suffer disadvantage if you report your genuine concerns.

It allows employees to bring to the attention of those who can make a difference any practice which they believe or suspect:

- is unlawful
- is a serious breach of the council's policies, procedures and rules (for example, the Contract Procedure Rules)
- falls substantially below established standards of practice
- amounts to improper conduct

It is difficult to come up with a complete list of issues which might cause concern, but you should report known or strongly suspected fraud, corruption, bribery, theft or financial irregularities; the physical, mental or sexual abuse of clients; sexual harassment, unfair discrimination; abuse of power; dangerous practices; criminal conduct; serious damage to the environment; negligence; unprofessional behaviour ; evasion of statutory responsibilities or where you believe that an activity is taking place which involves gross waste or mismanagement of funds.

The malpractice might be carried out by council employees, contractors, consultants, or councillors.

This procedure is not to be used if you are generally dissatisfied at work or as a replacement to your existing employment rights with the council. If you make any allegations maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action against you may be considered.

This policy is endorsed by all the trade unions representing council employees.

2. How to raise a concern

a) Through your manager

Normally you should first speak to your immediate manager. If you feel that you cannot do this – for example if you believe that they are involved – then you should speak to your Service Director. If you feel that you cannot discuss this with anyone within your Service area, you can contact the Service Director who has overall responsibility for Whistleblowing – who is Samantha Lawton, Service Director of Legal, Governance and Commissioning (who can be contacted by way of the council main switchboard 01484 221000 or samantha.lawton@kirklees.gov.uk.)

b) Through the Whistleblowing route

If you do not feel able to contact any of these people you should call the council's Whistleblowing answerphone – ring 01484 225030 or email whistleblowing@kirklees.gov.uk

You should give as much information as you can, including names, dates, places, history and why you are concerned. You are encouraged, but not required, to leave your name and contact details – it is much easier to investigate a concern if we can speak to you directly and confidentially.

All messages on the answerphone and email will be heard and seen only by the council's Corporate Customer Standards team. They will then review all messages confidentially, and contact either the Head of Risk or the Head of HR.

Involving your Trade Union

You may want to raise your concerns through your Union, and discuss with them the options available, or seek their help in taking your concerns forward.

3. How your concerns will be dealt with

All allegations will be investigated: how and by who depends on how serious they are and who they involve. The investigation may be handled internally or referred to an external agency such as the council's external auditor or the police. Internal investigations will be undertaken by an appropriate department, such as Internal Audit or HR, or in some instances by senior management within the service. The Corporate Customer Standards Officer retains overall responsibility for ensuring that all concerns are properly considered and dealt with appropriately.

If you raise your concerns under this policy, then we will write to you within 10 working days saying:

• what we intend to do
• how long we think this will take
• whether any more information is required from you

We will let you know the outcome of the investigation, so that you can see that the matter has been properly addressed.
The council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee will receive regular reports summarising all concerns raised under this policy.

If you make a Whistleblowing complaint, you have a right not to be bullied, harassed or mistreated as a consequence of this. If you believe that you are suffering detriment as result of your complaint you should report this to the Corporate Customer Standards Officer.

Any person who treats a whistle blower in a detrimental way as a result of their whistleblowing will be liable to disciplinary action.

4. Raising your concerns elsewhere

This Whistleblowing policy has been drawn up so that you can have your concerns dealt with properly, independently and confidentially by the Council. But if you have no faith in this process, then you may consider contacting:

• A councillor
• The council's external auditor Grant Thornton
  Grant Thornton UK LLP, No 1 Whitehall Riverside, Leeds. LS1 4BN
  Telephone 0113 245 5514
• The police – phone 101 from any phone
• Protect. (formerly Public Concern at Work) – an independent authority on whistleblowing at https://protect-advice.org.uk or phone 020 3117 2520
• An appropriate regulatory body, that the government believes may be appropriate to receive whistleblowing concerns as set out in;

Department of Business Innovation & Skills 15/298; Blowing the Whistle to a Prescribed Person; List of Prescribed Persons & Bodies
Web address:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies#:~:text=If%20you%20decide%20to%20blow,Office%20of%20Communications%20(Ofcom

5. Things to check

We welcome you raising your concerns, but do think about the need to be reasonably discreet;

- If you do decide to report your concerns outside the council, you must not disclose confidential information
- It's unlikely to be helpful to send mass emails

Provided that your behaviour is appropriate you will retain the statutory protection offered to Whistle-blowers. If you want more information about Whistleblowing, you might want to look at the government website

https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing/what-is-a-whistleblower

If you are thinking about whistleblowing, but are a bit unsure about anything in this process, you can speak to the Corporate Customer Standards Team.

Policy Reviewed	**September 2025**	**Headteacher and Governors**
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