Capel-le-Ferne
Capel Street, Capel-le-Ferne, Folkestone, Kent,
CT18 7HB, Phone: 01303 251353

Primary School
Headteacher – Mr A Richards
Email: office@capel-le-ferne.kent.sch.uk

Capel-le-Ferne Primary School

Whistleblowing Policy

Date agreed by Governors	07.10.2026
Date of next review	September 2027
Further information about policy	This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures. This is a core policy that forms part of the induction for all staff. It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy and sign to say they have read and understood its contents.

"Learning today for life tomorrow"
Our Values: Independence, Creativity, Confidence, Respect

Responsible people named in this policy:

Headteacher: Anthony Richards
Deputy DSLs: Dave Stafford, Amy Mercer and Clair Howard
Co-Chair of Governors: Beverley Taylor and Sarah Leonard

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Introduction

At Capel-le-Ferne Primary School we are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage staff and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns.
In some instances concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis. Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or relevant agencies. This procedure encourages staff to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within school rather than over-looking a problem or raising the matter outside. It applies to all staff, agency workers and supply staff and those contractors working on the premises, for example, cleaners, builders and drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with KCC in their own premises.
It is recognised that whistle blowing may engender feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or that staff may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in the behaviour that is causing concern, continuing. Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right.

Other Complaints Procedures

This procedure is separate from the school Complaints Procedures and other statutory reporting procedures. Child Protection issues should be reported according to the specific guidelines laid out in that policy. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affects an individual.

Behaviour that should cause concern:

- Conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- Conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur, the result of which means the school or KCC fails to comply with a legal obligation. For example unauthorised use of public funds, possible fraud and corruption, verbal, sexual or physical abuse, or other unethical conduct discrimination of any kind
- Disclosures related past, current or likely miscarriages of justice
- Past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Past, current or likely damage to the environment

Reasons for whistle-blowing:

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from whistle-blowing:

- Starting a chain of events which spirals.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern:

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can with the Headteacher. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- If your concern is about the Headteacher, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the Local Education Officer for your area or one of the Co-Chairs of Governors.
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest.
- Ideally you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can. As much evidence and context should be given as possible.
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.
- Concerns should be raised with the Headteacher where concerns relate to a staff member or a volunteer, and to the co-chair of governors if it concerns the Headteacher.

What happens next?:

- The concern will be investigated.
- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Investigating the concern and outcome:

When a concern is received by the headteacher, referred to from here as the 'recipient' – they will:

- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative.
- Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information. If it becomes apparent the concern is not of a whistle-blowing nature, the recipient should handle the concern in line with the appropriate policy/procedure.
- Reiterate, at this meeting, that they are protected from any unfair treatment or risk of dismissal as a result of raising the concern. If the concern is found to be malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action may be taken.
- Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there is:
  - The recipient should then arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the Governing Body if appropriate. In some cases, they may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In others, they may need to report the matter to the police.
  - The person who raised the concern should be informed of how the matter is being investigated and an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps.

Outcome of the investigation

- Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred. The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority or police.
- They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

- Beyond the immediate actions, the headteacher, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.
- Whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

Malicious Allegations
Staff are encouraged to raise concerns when they believe there to potentially be an issue. If an allegation is made in good faith, but the investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.
If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

Confidentiality
All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness.

Anonymous Allegations
Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful that those that are attributed to a named individual. However anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at the school's discretion.
In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:
• The seriousness of the issues raised
• The credibility of the concern; and
• The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Self reporting
There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with the Headteacher so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children. Further advice, support and contact details of support workers are available below as it is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful.

Advice and support
Advice and support is available from your Headteacher.

Useful contacts:
Headteacher: Anthony Richards (Anthony.richards@capel-le-ferne.kent.sch.uk)
Co-Chairs of Governors: Sarah Leonard **(**sarah.leonard@capel-le-ferne.kent.sch.uk) and Beverley Taylor (Beverley.taylor@capel-le-ferne.kent.sch.uk)
Area Education Officer: Lee Round **Telephone:** 03000 42 14 15 **Email:** Lee.Round@kent.gov.uk