



**AL-ZAHRA SCHOOL**

**WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

**2025/26**

School:	Al-Zahra School
Executive Head Teacher:	Mr. S A Khoei
Deputy Head Teachers	Mrs. S Rizvi (Secondary) Mrs. E Jaffri (Primary)
Proprietors appointed member of trustee overseeing school activities	Dr. Mesbahi
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs. Z Aldabagh
Deputy Safeguarding Lead:	Mr. S A Khoei (WS), Mrs. S Rizvi, Mr. Bayati (Secondary), Mrs. E Jaffri (Primary)
Brent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO),	Florence Linsey Walters
Policy Review Dates	
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the School. However, they may be reluctant to express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the School. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

The Proprietors of Al-Zahra school are committed to creating an atmosphere of openness and accountability. In line with that commitment it expects employees, and others that it deals with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of its work to come forward and voice those concerns. The School recognises that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

This policy document makes it clear that a person can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This whistleblowing policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within Al-Zahra school rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

This Policy is issued to employees and those undertaking duties and responsibilities on behalf of the Al-Zahra school during induction to advise specifically on blowing the whistle on wrongdoing. It should not be confused with other school's procedures such as the complaint or grievance, health and safety or safeguarding children and child protection policies.

### i. Policy Aims and Scope

This policy aims to:

- Encourage a person to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice;
- Provide avenues for a person to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- Ensure that the person receives a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if you they are not satisfied;
- Reassure the person that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have made any disclosure in good faith.

There are existing procedures in place to enable staff to lodge a complaint relating to their own employment. The whistle-blowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law,

- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice,
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees,
- Damage to the environment,
- Possible fraud and corruption,
- Child protection and/or safeguarding concerns,
- Sexual or physical abuse of vulnerable people,
- Fraud and corruption;
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- Discrimination (i.e. a witnessing discrimination as a third party);
- Failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
- Breach of school's policies and procedures including its Code of Conduct;
- Other unethical or criminal activity.

It is the duty of employees to speak up when they have serious concerns and it is the duty of the School to act on those concerns and protect and support employees when they do. A failure to report serious concerns could be construed as collusion. Difficult as it may be to speak up, employees should be aware of their special position and of their duty to make their concerns known.

## **2. WHISTLEBLOWING CONCERNS**

### **i. Raising a concern**

Al-Zahra school hopes that in many cases staff will be able to raise any concerns with their line manager, or the school's Designated safeguarding lead or Deputies and make any referral via them. They may be able to agree a way of resolving a concern quickly and effectively. However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your Line Manager has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, they should contact the Head Teacher who has responsibility for whistleblowing matters.

The Head Teacher will record sufficient details to enable the matter to be thoroughly investigated. As a minimum there will be a record of the name of the employee but also indicate whether the individual wishes his or her identity to remain confidential, if possible and the nature of the concern. In some cases, it will not be possible to maintain confidentiality and this will be explained to the employee. In such instances the employee will have the choice of either withdrawing or agreeing to his /her identity becoming known to enable the concern to be effectively dealt with. Staff may bring a colleague or a representative to any meetings under this policy who must respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

## ii. **Investigation and outcome**

When concerns are raised within the school the action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- be investigated internally by the school;
- be referred to be investigated by Brent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- be referred to the Police; or other related authority.

Within ten working days of a concern being received, the school will respond in writing to the individual raising a concern:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- indicating how the school propose to deal with the matter;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- confirming any initial enquiries have been made;
- confirming whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.

The amount of contact between the Head Teacher and employees will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from the employee. Al-Zahra school accept that employees need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, employees will receive information about the outcomes of any investigations and any changes to working practices as far as is reasonably practicable.

## **2. Safeguards**

### i. **Harassment or Victimisation**

Al-Zahra school recognise that deciding to report a concern can be difficult, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. The school will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect employees when you raise a concern in good faith. However, if an employee is already the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures, those procedures will not be halted as a result of the whistleblowing.

### ii. **Confidentiality**

All concerns will be treated in confidence and Al-Zahra school will do their best to protect employee's identity when a concern is raised and an employee does not want their name to be disclosed. It must, however, be appreciated that the

investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement may be required as part of the evidence.

iii. **Anonymous**

We also understand that individuals may wish to remain anonymous while making report of a concern. As such comment boxes are placed in strategic places in the school for those who want to identify and raise an issue in school but wish to remain anonymous. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of Al-Zahra school.

iv. **Untrue Allegations**

If allegations are made in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against an employee. In such circumstances employees will be supported. If, however, an employee makes a malicious or vexatious allegation, disciplinary action may be taken. The matter would be referred to the Proprietors of Al-Zahra school before any action is taken.

v. **Support**

Throughout and after the difficult process of whistleblowing, employees will be given full support from the management, concerns will be taken seriously and the school will do all it can to help employees. The school will ensure that employees using this procedure are not disadvantaged or unfairly treated.

vi. **Concerns against Deputies or Senior Leadership Team**

If a concern against a Deputy or Senior Leadership Team member, this will be treated in the same way as any other concern. It will receive the same serious consideration. The concern must be raised with the Head Teacher, and if its regarding the Head Teacher, staff should report the matter in confidence to the Proprietors. In normal circumstances such a concern would be referred to the Department for Education for action.

vii. **External disclosures**

The aim of this policy has been to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases staff should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting

certain types of concern. Alternatively, when staff feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, or in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head Teacher, or the Proprietor, allegations should be reported directly to the Brent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who can be contacted directly in writing or by telephone.

General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via:

<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>;

or at the NSPCC's

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>;

alternatively they could be emailed at [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).