	WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY	
	Introduction In our pursuit of providing exceptional educational opportunities for all our students, The Bridge SEN School upholds a stringent commitment to the highest levels of care, transparency, and ethical conduct in all our operations, aligning with the duty of candour requirements. We firmly believe that the safety of our Learners must always be the top priority. We understand that it can sometimes be challenging for staff to voice concerns about the actions of others, including managers. However, we must emphasise that not raising these concerns can have grave consequences, not only for The Bridge SEN School and its staff but, most importantly, for those under our care. The Bridge SEN School acknowledges that our staff members are often the first to notice potential issues within the organisation, but they might be hesitant to report these concerns, fearing that doing so could be perceived as disloyal to their colleagues or the school itself. They might also be concerned about potential legal consequences for their employer. Additionally, worries about harassment, victimisation, job security, or reduced work hours might deter them from coming forward. The Bridge SEN School is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we encourage employees, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the school's work, to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This policy document makes it clear that staff can do so without fear of reprisals. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable staff of the school to raise serious concerns within the school rather than overlooking a problem or discussing it externally. The policy provides a means a concern can be raised under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which provides a certain level of legal protection where a staff wishes to raise legitimate concerns. This policy is in line with Croydon Local Authority's Whistleblowing Policy And Procedure And Disclosures Update.pdf	

Aims of the Policy

Staff members have a responsibility to maintain the highest standards of learning quality and to protect the interests of our learners by reporting any wrongdoing, malfeasance, or malpractice. The aim of this policy is to provide avenues for employees to raise genuine concerns at the earliest possible time and receive feedback on action taken. It also reassures you that you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing through positive intentions.

There are existing procedures in place to enable a grievance to be lodged. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures, although the school reserves the right to determine which procedure is appropriate. Concerns that are found to have been made with malice or not in good faith, would amount to improper conduct and disciplinary action may be initiated.

Safeguards

The school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, 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 you when you raise a concern in good faith. This does not necessarily mean that if you are already the subject of procedures such as disciplinary, improving performance, grievance or managing attendance, those procedures will be halted as a result of your whistle-blowing.

Confidentiality

i. The Bridge SEN School treats the details of all whistleblowers in confidence and will make all efforts to prevent their identity from being divulged. However, depending on the nature of the case, it may be hard to reveal the nature of the incident without making the identity of the whistleblower known.

ii. Anonymous allegations will be considered but the decision to pursue the investigation will depend on the seriousness and credibility of the allegation.

iii. If an allegation made in good faith is confirmed through investigation to be untrue, no action will be taken against the whistleblower. If, however, a malicious or vindictive allegation is made appropriate action will be taken against the whistleblower.

Procedure

i. The concern should be raised to the Head Teacher. This depends on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is involved in malpractice. If the Head Teacher is involved, the concern can be raised with the principal. If the Principal is suspected of being involved in the matter, Croydon Council should be contacted.

ii. While the allegation does not need to be proved, sufficient evidence needs to be demonstrated to justify the concern.

iii. Concerns need to be raised in writing. Even if you informally mention them to a senior member of staff officially there must be a written record.

iv. The school will refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who will advise whether the best course of action will be.

This could include:

- Internal investigation
- Referral to the Police
- Independent inquiry

V. Within one working week of a concern being received, where appropriate, the school will write to you:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter (including potential timescales)
- informing you whether any initial enquiries have been made; and
- informing you whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.

vi. The Head Teacher may schedule a meeting to address the concern. In this case, the whistleblower may be accompanied by a colleague or a representative from the relevant work area to the meeting. This individual must uphold the confidentiality of the disclosure and any ensuing investigation.

vii. The school will endeavour to provide evidence that the matter has been properly addressed. Subject to any legal restrictions evidence will be provided to the whistleblower confirming the outcome of the investigations and their findings.

Responsibilities

Different members of staff have responsibilities according to their role:

i. **Governing Body**

- Approving amendments to the policy
- To maintain confidentiality
- To provide consultation in the case of a concern raised – **Designated Governor: Lynn Nuttall**
  lynnn50@hotmail.com

ii. **The Principal**

- Approving amendments to the policy
- Promoting the policy periodically
- Maintaining a record of concerns raised and the outcomes

iii. Head Teacher

- Maintaining and operating the policy
- Annual review of the policy
- Annual report on the effectiveness of the policy
- To undertake investigations without undue delay.
- To maintain confidentiality.
- Maintaining a record of concerns raised and the outcomes

iv. **Employees**

• To raise issues of concern responsibly.

v. **Others**

• Raise any concerns which you may want to bring to our attention. While The Bridge SEN School will always endeavour to protect the anonymity of the Whistleblower, this policy does not protect employees of external organisations in the same way as school employees.

If Concerns are not Addressed

If any staff member feels their concerns have not been taken seriously or addressed appropriately, they can go straight to the regulators and express their concerns:

Ofsted
0300 123 1231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

NSPCC
0808 800 5000
help@nspecc.org.uk

Local authority: London Borough of Croydon
Monitoring Officer, Croydon Council, Bernard Weatherill House, 8 Mint Walk, Croydon, CR0 1EA
MonitoringOfficer@croydon.gov.uk
020 8726 6000 (Extension: x23993)

Call MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) if you're concerned about a child who might be suffering harm:
Office Hours (Mon–Fri, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm): Call 0208 255 2888
Out-of-Hours (Evenings and Weekends): Call the Emergency Duty Team on 0208 726 6400 (press 5)

	Updated November 2026 Next update scheduled for December 2027	