

ST FAITH & ST MARTIN
CHURCH OF ENGLAND JUNIOR SCHOOL
Whistleblowing Policy

Maintained school procedure • September 2026

Policy status

This is the school's whistleblowing procedure for Governing Body approval. It is based on Lincolnshire County Council's whistleblowing arrangements, the Department for Education guidance for maintained schools, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. It has been adapted for the school's circumstances as a Church of England voluntary controlled, local-authority-maintained junior school.

Responsible body	Governing Body
Named staff contact	Headteacher – Mr Martin Kyle
Named governor contact	Chair of Governors (contact via the Clerk to Governors / school office) kate.geary@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Alternative governor route	Vice-Chair of Governors where the Chair is involved, unavailable or has a conflict of interest via clerk: kate.geary@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Local authority	Lincolnshire County Council
Last reviewed	September 2026
Next review due	September 2027, or sooner if guidance / law / LA arrangements change

School: Hampton Street, Lincoln, LN1 1LW • 01522 528063 • enquiries@sfsmlincs.sch.uk

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At a glance: where should I report?

Situation	Route
Normal whistleblowing route	Headteacher – Mr Martin Kyle.
Concern about the Headteacher, or it would be inappropriate to report to him	Chair of Governors, via the Clerk to Governors / school office.
Concern about the Chair, or the Chair is conflicted / unavailable	Vice-Chair of Governors.
You cannot safely use the school route, or a genuine concern is not being addressed	Lincolnshire County Council confidential whistleblowing route – see section 7.
Poor or unsafe child-protection practice and you cannot raise it internally	NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line – 0800 028 0285 / help@nspcc.org.uk .
Immediate danger	Call 999 and follow the school's safeguarding procedures. Do not wait for the whistleblowing process.

Safeguarding always takes priority

Whistleblowing is not a substitute for immediate child-protection action. A concern about a child's safety must be reported without delay under the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This whistleblowing procedure is particularly relevant where there is poor or unsafe safeguarding practice, a failure to act, a cover-up, or a person feels unable to use the normal safeguarding route.

1. Aims

St Faith & St Martin Church of England Junior School is committed to an open, safe and accountable culture in which concerns can be raised early and dealt with properly. This policy supports the school's values of honesty, responsibility and respect, and its duty to safeguard children.

This policy aims to:

- Encourage staff and others working in or for the school to raise concerns about suspected wrongdoing or unsafe practice at the earliest opportunity, knowing that genuine concerns will be taken seriously.
- Set out clear internal, local-authority and external routes for raising concerns.
- Explain the protection and support available to people who raise qualifying whistleblowing concerns.
- Ensure concerns are considered fairly, proportionately and confidentially as far as possible.
- Make clear the relationship between whistleblowing, safeguarding, allegations / low-level concerns, grievances and complaints.
- Ensure all staff, including temporary staff, agency staff and contractors, know how to use the school's arrangements.
- Ensure concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice, including failures to act on child-protection concerns, can be raised and escalated where necessary.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended by the Governing Body. It applies to school employees and is also available to volunteers, trainee teachers, governors, supply / agency staff, contractors, consultants and other people working in or for the school. Statutory whistleblowing protection depends on a person's legal status and the circumstances of the disclosure; independent advice should be sought where needed.

2. Legislation and guidance

The Governing Body is responsible for agreeing and establishing the whistleblowing procedure for this maintained school. The Department for Education advises maintained schools to base their procedure on the local authority's arrangements, tailor it to the school, appoint at least one staff member and one governor as contacts, and tell all staff – including temporary staff and contractors – about the protection, matters covered and reporting routes available.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE), paragraphs 80 to 82, requires staff and volunteers to be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice, requires appropriate whistleblowing procedures, and recognises that external channels must be available where a person feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or believes genuine concerns are not being addressed.

This policy takes account of:

- Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended, including the statutory provisions on protected disclosures;
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA);
- current GOV.UK whistleblowing guidance, including the 2026 change recognising sexual harassment as a qualifying disclosure;
- Department for Education: Whistleblowing procedure for maintained schools;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Lincolnshire County Council Whistleblowing Policy and reporting arrangements; and
- Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures for concerns about people who work or volunteer with children.

3. Definition and scope of whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is when a worker discloses information about wrongdoing and reasonably believes both that the information tends to show a qualifying type of wrongdoing and that making the disclosure is in the public interest. A concern can relate to something that happened in the past, is happening now, or is likely to happen.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a criminal offence, such as fraud, bribery, corruption, theft or other financial wrongdoing;

- a breach of a legal obligation or statutory requirement;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- danger to the health or safety of pupils, staff, visitors or the public;
- actual or likely environmental damage;
- sexual harassment;
- misuse of public funds, school money, assets or resources;
- poor or unsafe safeguarding practice, a failure in safeguarding provision, or a failure to act on concerns about a child or the behaviour of an adult;
- serious professional misconduct, abuse of position or other serious wrongdoing that it is in the public interest to disclose; or
- deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above.

You do not need to prove the allegation before raising it. You should, however, have a reasonable basis for the concern and provide the information you have honestly.

3.1 Concerns that are not normally whistleblowing

A personal grievance that concerns only your own employment position will not normally be whistleblowing. It should usually be raised under the school / local authority grievance or employee-resolution procedure. A matter may nevertheless amount to whistleblowing where there is a wider public-interest element.

- Parent or carer complaints should normally be dealt with under the School Complaints Policy.
- Routine employment disputes should normally use the relevant HR procedure.
- A safeguarding concern about a child must be acted on immediately under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- A safeguarding concern or allegation about an adult working with children must be dealt with under KCSIE and the school's allegations / low-level concerns procedures. Whistleblowing remains available if those systems are not being applied properly, are failing, or cannot safely be used.

4. Procedure for raising a whistleblowing concern

4.1 When to raise a concern

Raise a concern as early as possible. Earlier reporting is more likely to enable the school or local authority to protect people, preserve evidence and stop wrongdoing. If urgent action is needed, the school will not wait for the whistleblowing process before acting.

4.2 Who to report to

Contact	When to use
Headteacher – Mr Martin Kyle	The normal first school contact for a whistleblowing concern.
Chair of Governors	Use this route if the concern is about the Headteacher, the Headteacher may be involved, there is a conflict of interest, you do not feel able to report to the Headteacher, or you believe the Headteacher has not addressed the concern appropriately.
Vice-Chair of Governors	Use this route if the concern is about the Chair of Governors, the Chair is conflicted, or the Chair is unavailable.
Lincolnshire County Council	Use the LA route if you feel unable to raise the concern within school, the internal routes are inappropriate, or you believe a genuine concern is not being addressed. Contact details are in section 7 and Appendix 1.

School office: 01522 528063 | enquiries@sfsmlincs.sch.uk. Ask for confidential contact with the Headteacher or Clerk to Governors as appropriate. Do not send a concern to a person who is the subject of it.

4.3 Safeguarding concerns

- If a child is in immediate danger, call 999 and follow safeguarding procedures immediately.
- Concerns about the behaviour of staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers or contractors must be managed under KCSIE and the school's relevant safeguarding procedures.
- Where an allegation meets, or may meet, the harm threshold, the Headteacher should take advice from / refer to the Lincolnshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as required. A concern about the Headteacher should be referred to the Chair of Governors and the LADO route used as appropriate.
- If you are worried about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice, a failure to act, a cover-up, or how a safeguarding concern is being handled, use this policy and escalate if necessary.

4.4 How to raise the concern

A concern may be raised verbally or in writing. Written reporting is encouraged where practicable because it helps create an accurate record. Make clear that you are raising a whistleblowing concern.

Where possible include:

- names of those involved;
- relevant dates, times and places;
- a clear description of what you have seen, heard or become aware of;
- why you are concerned and why you believe the matter may be in the public interest;
- any documents or evidence you already hold lawfully;
- details of any personal interest you have in the matter; and
- whether you have raised the concern previously and what happened.

Do not investigate the concern yourself

Do not interview witnesses, search records you are not authorised to access, covertly record people, or take steps that could compromise a safeguarding, disciplinary, criminal or regulatory investigation. Preserve relevant information you already hold lawfully and report the concern.

4.5 Confidentiality and anonymous reporting

The school hopes people will feel able to raise concerns openly. If you ask for confidentiality, the school will make every reasonable effort to protect your identity. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed: information may have to be disclosed where required by law, necessary to protect a child or another person, or necessary for a fair investigation or legal / disciplinary process. Where lawful and practicable, this will be discussed with you first.

Anonymous concerns will be considered, but anonymity can make investigation, corroboration and feedback more difficult. The school will consider the seriousness and credibility of the concern, the available evidence, and whether the matter can be verified from other sources.

5. How the school will respond

The response will depend on the nature and seriousness of the concern. The person receiving the concern is referred to in this section as the "recipient". The recipient must not investigate a matter in which they are implicated or have a conflict of interest.

5.1 Initial response

- Meet or speak with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time and obtain enough information to understand the issue.
- Create an accurate written record. Where a meeting takes place, the whistleblower should be given a written summary of the concern and an opportunity to correct factual inaccuracies.
- Consider immediately whether safeguarding, health and safety, police, LADO, local-authority, audit or other specialist action is required.
- Decide whether the matter is a whistleblowing concern. If another procedure is more appropriate, explain this and ensure the concern is transferred safely and promptly to the correct route.
- Assess conflicts of interest and decide who is suitable to conduct any further enquiries or investigation.

- Explain confidentiality, likely next steps, support and expected communication.

A staff member may normally be accompanied at a whistleblowing meeting by a trade union / professional association representative or a work colleague who is not involved in the matter. The companion must respect confidentiality.

5.2 Investigation and referral

Depending on the concern, the school may:

- give advice or resolve the matter by agreed action without a formal investigation;
- carry out initial enquiries to decide whether further investigation is required;
- appoint an appropriate internal investigator;
- seek support from Lincolnshire County Council, HR, internal audit / counter-fraud specialists, legal services or safeguarding teams;
- commission an independent investigation where objectivity or specialist expertise is needed;
- refer safeguarding matters to the LADO, children's social care and/or police as appropriate;
- refer suspected criminal matters to the police; or
- refer the concern to another regulator or prescribed body where appropriate.

Where urgent action is needed to safeguard a child or another person, protect evidence or prevent further loss / harm, that action will be taken before or alongside any investigation.

5.3 Communication and timescales

The school will aim to mirror Lincolnshire County Council's current response standards:

Timing	What to expect
Within 5 working days	Acknowledge receipt of the whistleblowing concern, unless doing so would create an identifiable safeguarding or investigative risk.
Within the next 10 working days	Explain, as far as possible, how the school proposes to deal with the matter; whether initial enquiries have been made; whether further investigation is required; who the contact / investigating person is where appropriate; an estimate of timescale; and what support is available.
During the process	Keep the whistleblower appropriately informed. The frequency and detail of updates will depend on the nature of the concern and legal, safeguarding, employment and confidentiality constraints.
At the conclusion	Provide proportionate feedback, where possible, to give assurance that the concern has been considered and dealt with. The school may be unable to disclose confidential information about another person, evidence, sanctions or disciplinary outcomes.

Urgent safeguarding and protective action is not subject to these timescales and must be taken immediately when required.

5.4 Outcome, learning and fairness

Once the appropriate enquiries or investigation are complete, the decision-maker will record the findings, actions and any recommendations. Where wrongdoing is substantiated, the school will take appropriate corrective action and consider whether policies, controls, training or culture need to change to reduce the risk of recurrence.

The person who is the subject of a concern is also entitled to fair treatment. Where an employment process is required, the relevant disciplinary, safeguarding, capability or other procedure will be followed. Raising a concern does not, by itself, establish wrongdoing.

The school will retain confidential records of concerns, decisions, referrals, investigations and actions in accordance with data-protection law and applicable records-retention requirements.

6. Deliberately false or malicious allegations

No disciplinary or adverse action will be taken against a person simply because a concern raised with a reasonable belief is not substantiated, or because the person turns out to be mistaken.

If, however, a person deliberately invents an allegation, knowingly provides false information, fabricates evidence, or acts maliciously, the school may consider action under the relevant conduct or disciplinary procedure. This provision must never be used to deter genuine whistleblowing or robust safeguarding concerns.

7. Escalating concerns beyond the school

The school wants concerns to be raised through the route most likely to address them quickly and safely. In many cases this will be the school or Lincolnshire County Council. The law also recognises that external disclosures may be appropriate in some circumstances. Different legal tests can apply depending on who receives the disclosure, so independent advice may be helpful.

7.1 Lincolnshire County Council

This school is local-authority maintained and this policy adopts and adapts the relevant Lincolnshire County Council whistleblowing arrangements as the school's LA route. You can use the Council's confidential reporting arrangements where you feel unable to use the school route, the school contacts are implicated or conflicted, or you believe a genuine concern is not being addressed.

Confidential email	whistleblowing@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Confidential freephone	0800 0853716 (normally 9am to 5pm; secure answerphone outside those hours)
Confidential post	Lincolnshire County Council, PO Box 640, Lincoln, LN1 1WF

When contacting the Council, state that the matter concerns St Faith & St Martin Church of England Junior School and that you are raising the concern under whistleblowing arrangements. The Council encourages written concerns where possible and asks for background, names, dates, places, documents and an explanation of why the matter is concerning.

7.2 Safeguarding and LADO routes

Route	Use / contact
Lincolnshire LADO	For allegations / concerns about a person who works or volunteers with children where the harm threshold may be met. Advice line: 01522 554674. Referral email: LSCP_LADO@lincolnshire.gov.uk.
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	For professionals who do not feel able to raise child-protection failures internally, or who are concerned about how a child-protection concern is being handled. 0800 028 0285; help@nspcc.org.uk.
Immediate danger / suspected crime	999 for an emergency. Police 101 for non-emergency crime reporting where appropriate. Safeguarding action must not be delayed.

7.3 Other independent and prescribed routes

Route	Purpose
Protect	Independent whistleblowing charity offering confidential advice. Advice line: 020 3117 2520.

Route	Purpose
Department for Education	The Secretary of State for Education is a prescribed person for matters relating to maintained schools in England. Telephone: 0370 000 2288. Check the current GOV.UK prescribed-persons list before making a disclosure.
Legal adviser / trade union / professional association	You may seek independent advice before or while raising a concern.
Other prescribed person or regulator	Choose a prescribed person whose statutory remit covers the issue. The current GOV.UK list should be checked because contacts and remits can change.

A disclosure to the media is subject to more demanding statutory conditions and should not be assumed to be protected. Seek independent or legal advice before considering that route.

8. Protection and support for whistleblowers

Workers who make a protected disclosure are protected by law from detriment because they have blown the whistle. Employees may also have protection from automatic unfair dismissal. Legal protection depends on the statutory conditions being met.

- The school will not tolerate harassment, victimisation, threats, informal pressure or other detrimental treatment because someone has raised a genuine concern.
- Any employee who retaliates against or attempts to silence a whistleblower may face disciplinary action.
- The school will consider reasonable measures to protect confidentiality and wellbeing during the process.
- A member of staff may seek support from a trade union or professional association and may normally be accompanied at relevant meetings.
- Where appropriate, the school will offer wellbeing check-ins and signposting for both the whistleblower and the person who is the subject of a concern, without compromising the investigation.
- Confidentiality or non-disclosure clauses cannot lawfully prevent a worker from making a protected whistleblowing disclosure where the statutory conditions are met.

If you believe you have suffered detrimental treatment because you raised a whistleblowing concern, report this promptly to the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Lincolnshire County Council or another appropriate route, depending on who is involved. You may also wish to seek independent legal, union or Protect advice.

9. Approval, monitoring and review

The Governing Body is responsible for approving and reviewing this policy and for assuring itself that effective whistleblowing arrangements operate in practice.

- By approving this policy, the Governing Body designates the Headteacher as the named staff contact, the Chair of Governors as the named governor contact, and the Vice-Chair as the alternative governor route where required.
- The Governing Body minutes will record the school's whistleblowing arrangements and the people inside and outside the school whom staff can contact.
- All staff will be informed of the procedure, including temporary staff and contractors, and the arrangements will be included in appropriate induction / safeguarding information.
- The Governing Body will receive proportionate, anonymised assurance information about the operation of the policy, such as the number and broad themes of concerns and any lessons or improvements. Information must not identify individuals unnecessarily.
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if KCSIE, legislation, DfE guidance, Lincolnshire County Council arrangements or the school's governance / contact details change.

Sources used for this September 2026 version

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#)
- [DfE – Whistleblowing procedure for maintained schools](#)
- [Lincolnshire County Council – Whistleblowing policy](#)
- [GOV.UK – Whistleblowing for employees](#)
- [GOV.UK – Whistleblowing: list of prescribed people and bodies](#)
- [Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership – LADO](#)
- [NSPCC – Whistleblowing Advice Line](#)
- [St Faith & St Martin Church of England Junior School website](#)

10. Links with other policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Statement / procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff, including low-level concerns
- Staff Code of Conduct / Staff Behaviour Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- School Complaints Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy and privacy notices
- Financial procedures and fraud / irregularity controls

Appendix 1 – Quick reporting guide and contacts

Simple reporting rule

Use the person best placed to act unless that person is implicated or conflicted. If a child or another person is in immediate danger, take protective action first and do not wait for the whistleblowing process.

Question	Action
1. Is someone in immediate danger?	Yes → call 999 / take immediate safeguarding action. Then use the appropriate safeguarding and whistleblowing route.
2. Is it a safeguarding concern or allegation about an adult working with children?	Follow KCSIE and the school safeguarding / allegations procedure. Headteacher is normally the school lead; a concern about the Headteacher goes to the Chair; contact LADO as required.
3. Is it poor or unsafe safeguarding practice, a failure to act, or a cover-up?	Use this Whistleblowing Policy. Report to Headteacher unless inappropriate; then Chair / Vice-Chair; escalate to LCC or NSPCC if necessary.
4. Is it another serious public-interest wrongdoing?	Raise it with the Headteacher or, where appropriate, the Chair / Vice-Chair.
5. Can the school route not safely be used, or has the concern not been addressed?	Use Lincolnshire County Council's confidential whistleblowing route and, where appropriate, a prescribed / external route.

Key contacts

School office	01522 528063 enquiries@sfsm.lincs.sch.uk
Headteacher	Mr Martin Kyle
Governor route	Chair of Governors; if conflicted / implicated, Vice-Chair. Contact via Clerk to Governors kate.geary@lincolnshire.gov.uk / school office.
Lincolnshire County Council whistleblowing	whistleblowing@lincolnshire.gov.uk 0800 0853716 PO Box 640, Lincoln, LN1 1WF
Lincolnshire LADO	01522 554674 LSCP_LADO@lincolnshire.gov.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
Protect	020 3117 2520
Department for Education	0370 000 2288
Emergency	999

Appendix 2 – Optional whistleblowing concern record

This form is optional. A concern may be raised verbally. If you use this form, send it only to the appropriate whistleblowing contact and mark it PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Your name	
Role / relationship to the school	
Preferred confidential contact details	
Date concern raised	
Who are you raising the concern with?	
What is the concern?	
When and where did the relevant events happen?	
Who is involved or may have relevant information?	
Why do you believe this is serious / in the public interest?	
What supporting information or documents are available?	
Have you raised this before? If yes, with whom and what happened?	
Is anyone at immediate risk or is urgent action needed?	
Any confidentiality or communication concerns we should know about?	

For school use: record the date received, decision-maker, conflict checks, safeguarding / LADO / police / LA referrals, investigation route, key actions, communication dates, outcome and review / learning. Store securely with restricted access.