



Olga Primary School

Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Date: August 2025
Review Date: August 2026

Introduction

The Staff and Governors of Olga Primary School seek to run all aspects of School business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. In the event that members of School Staff, Parents/Carers, Governors or the School community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, Olga Primary School has established the following Whistleblowing Policy, or Code of Practice, which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Throughout this Policy, the term Whistleblower denotes the person raising the concern or making the complaint. It is not meant in a pejorative sense and is entirely consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the *Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies* published in May 1996.

Olga Primary School is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all children, to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. The School recognises that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system that allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the School environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the School.

Olga Primary School is committed to creating a climate of trust and openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved.

The provisions of this Policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety and not matters of more general grievance that would be dealt with under the School's grievance procedures.

(See also the 'Whistleblowing' section of Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and guidance on Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff)

1. When Might The Whistleblowing Policy Apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which Olga Primary School considers should be dealt with under this Policy includes:

- Inappropriate conduct with children, leading to concerns regarding safeguarding.
- Manipulation of accounting records and finances.
- Inappropriate use of School assets or funds.
- Decision-making for personal gain.
- Any criminal activity.
- Abuse of position.
- Fraud and deceit.
- Serious breaches of School procedures which may advantage a particular party (for example tampering with tender documentation, failure to register a personal interest).

Where the concern relates to the safeguarding of children, the interests and well-being of any child involved will always be paramount. The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line 0800 028 0285 is free and anonymous. More information can be found at [NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line](#).

The following “Red Flag Behaviours” give indications of the kinds of situations which should be shared with a senior member of Staff, or, in the case of concerns regarding the Headteacher, with the Chair of Governors or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). (See contact details below).

An Adult who:

- Allows a pupil/young person to be treated badly and/or pretends not to know it is happening.
- Gossips/shares information inappropriately.
- Demonstrates inappropriate discriminatory behaviour and/or uses inappropriate language.
- Dresses in a way which is inappropriate for the job role.
- Does not treat pupils fairly - demonstrates favouritism.
- Demonstrates a lack of understanding about personal and professional boundaries.
- Uses his/her position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine.
- Appears to have an inappropriate social relationship with a pupil or pupils.
- Appears to have special or different relationships with a pupil or pupils.
- Seems to seek out unnecessary opportunities to be alone with a pupil.

2. What Action Should The Whistleblower Take Regarding Safeguarding Concerns?

The School policy Managing Allegations Of Abuse Against Staff provides further details regarding the procedures when allegations involve safeguarding concerns.

All Staff should feel able to raise a concern about poor or unsafe practice or about individual Staff members. Advice can be found on the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line 0800 028 0285 for any member of Staff who feels unable to raise matters internally.

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague’s career. All Staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

An allegation involving safeguarding concerns is any information which indicates that a member of Staff or volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children or

- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

This applies to any child the member of Staff or volunteer has contact within their personal, professional or community life. To reduce the risk of unfounded allegations, all Staff should be aware of safer working practice and should be familiar with the guidance contained in the Staff Code of Conduct.

The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. S/he should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification; it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Actions to be taken include making an immediate written record of the allegation using the informant's words - including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, brief details of what happened, what was said and who was present. This record should be signed, dated and immediately passed on to the Headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If the concerns are about the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors should be contacted.

The Chair of Governors in this School is: Lorraine Moss
email: lorraine@olga.towerhamlets.sch.uk

The recipient of an allegation must not unilaterally determine its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

The Headteacher/ Chair of Governors will not investigate the allegation herself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether it is necessary to refer the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for safeguarding concerns:
Melanie Benzie
email: lado@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Tel: 020 7364 0677 or 07903 238827

Where an allegation involves safeguarding concerns as defined above contact should always be made with the Tower Hamlets Child Protection Advice Line (020 7364 3444) and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay. If it is decided that the allegation meets the threshold for safeguarding, this will take place in accordance with Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board Procedures. In serious cases, the LADO may advise that a matter requires immediate intervention by social care or the Police. An allegation involving a member of Staff who is no longer teaching or historical allegations should be referred to the Police.

Allegations should always be dealt with using the appropriate channels as set out in this Policy. It is a criminal offence under the Education Act 2002 to 'publish' any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher in a School who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same School. 'Publishing' includes telling any section of the public in writing or orally and may

include posting comments even on 'closed' social media groups if enough people are members of the group. The reporting restrictions apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the Secretary of State publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation or the individual accused 'goes public' or waives their right to anonymity in writing.

3. What Action Should The Whistleblower Take Regarding Financial Or Administrative Concerns?

Olga Primary School encourages the Whistleblower to raise the matter internally in the first instance. The School has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the Whistleblower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Lisa Bradley-Jones, Headteacher:
email: head@olga.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Tel: 020 8981 7127

David Waller, SAFS:
811 Wharfside Point South, 4 Prestons Road, London, E14 9EL.
email: david@schoolaccounts.co.uk
Tel: 07782 206017

Lorraine Moss, Chair of Governors:
email: lorraine@olga.towerhamlets.sch.uk

The Whistleblower may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in written form marked private and confidential and addressed to one of the above-named individuals. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible.

Alternatively if the Whistleblower considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise within the internal environment of the School, the matter should be directed in the first instance to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets through one of the following routes:-

LBTH Whistleblowing Hotline: 0800 528 0294

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has its own procedures for dealing with such matters and will ensure every effort to respect the confidentiality of the Whistleblower. The LA will ensure relevant officers of the Department for Education (DfE) are informed as appropriate.

In addition, information and advice can be obtained from the charity Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work). This charity offers free legal advice in certain circumstances to people concerned about serious malpractice at work. Their literature states that matters are handled in strict confidence and without obligation. Contact details for the charity are as follows:

Protect
The Green House

244-254 Cambridge Heath Road
London E2 9DA

Protect Advice Line: 020 3117 2520 (* Option 1)
Business Support: 020 3117 2520 (* Option 2)

4. How Will The Matter Be Progressed

Where the allegation includes safeguarding concerns, the LADO will be informed and the procedures set out in the School Policy Managing Allegations Of Abuse Against Staff will be followed. The School will not question the member(s) of Staff or conduct any investigation unless asked to do so by the LADO.

Appendix 1 shows the procedures flowchart in case of allegations of abuse.

In other cases, the individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation (the investigating officer(s)) will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of School Staff, legal or personnel advisors, the Police, the Department for Education, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigating officer(s), possibly in conjunction with the governing body, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third-party referral such as the Police.

The Whistleblower may, if appropriate and lawful (having regard in particular to the requirements of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018), be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. However, in some cases it may not be appropriate or lawful for the Whistleblower to be provided with any details of the outcome. Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the governing body and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

If the Whistleblower is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the investigating officer(s), the governing body and/or directed to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

5. Respecting Confidentiality

Wherever possible Olga Primary School seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the Whistleblower and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals. The School will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the Whistleblower or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances

6. Raising Unfounded Malicious Concerns

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious, unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances.

7. Conclusion

This Whistleblowing Policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the School. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.

Appendix 1 - Child Protection Process Flowchart

London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Allegations against staff or volunteers, Child Protection Process
Flowchart

