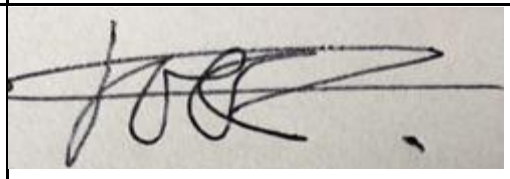
Darell Primary & Nursery School - Whistleblowing policy

Governors' Committee Responsible	**Full Governing Body**
Status	**Statutory**
Review Cycle	**Every 2 years**
Date written/last review	**October 2026**
Date of next review	**October 2028**
Approved By: **Joe Porter Headteacher**	
Approved By: **Laura Morgan - Chair of Governors**	

At Darell, our values drive everything that we do. As a school, we value:









- Equality - we celebrate our differences and treat everyone equally and fairly.
- Responsibility - we take responsibility for our behaviour. We are kind and caring to ourselves and others.
- Enjoyment - we are passionate about learning and look for enjoyment in everything we do.
- Aspiration - we place no ceiling on what we can achieve. We challenge each other to be the best that we can be.

Darell Primary & Nursery School Ethos: We are committed to maintaining an open, honest, and accountable workplace culture where staff feel empowered to raise genuine concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice without fear of reprisal.

1. Introduction and Core Purpose

1.1. Darell Primary & Nursery School is dedicated to conducting its activities with high standards of integrity, transparency, and propriety. The Governing Body expects all employees, governors, volunteers, and contractors to maintain these high standards.

1.2. The core purpose of this Whistleblowing Policy is to:

- Encourage staff to report genuine concerns regarding illegal acts, malpractice, or unethical behaviour at the earliest opportunity.
- Provide clear reporting channels and transparent investigation procedures.
- Guarantee robust protection against victimisation, harassment, or detriment for anyone raising a concern in good faith and in the public interest.
- Reassure staff that disclosures will be handled with appropriate confidentiality.

2. Definitions & Scope

2.1 Key Definitions

Whistleblower: Any individual working for or affiliated with the school (including employees, supply staff, volunteers, governors, and contractors) who discloses information regarding suspected wrongdoing or serious misconduct in the public interest.

Public Interest Disclosure: A disclosure made in good faith where the individual reasonably believes that the disclosure shows evidence of wrongdoing affecting the wider school community, public funds, or child safety.

2.2 Qualifying Concerns

This policy applies to disclosures relating to serious matters including, but not limited to:

- Child protection or safeguarding failures, breaches of KCSIE, or unaddressed allegations against staff.
- Criminal offenses, fraud, financial corruption, or bribery.
- Failure to comply with legal obligations, statutory regulations, or school policies.
- Health and safety risks posing danger to pupils, staff, or visitors.
- Damage or potential damage to the environment.
- Deliberate concealment or cover-ups relating to any of the above.

Note: Personal grievances (e.g., individual employment disputes, personal harassment, or working conditions) fall outside the scope of whistleblowing and must be raised via the School's Grievance Procedure.

3. Safeguards & Protection for Whistleblowers

3.1 Legal Protection against Reprisals

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA), workers who make a qualifying disclosure are legally protected from suffering any detriment (such as dismissal, disciplinary action, demotion, or victimisation). The school management and Governing Body will strictly enforce this protection.

3.2 Confidentiality

The school will make every effort to protect the identity of any staff member who raises a concern and requests that their name not be disclosed. However, it must be recognized that an investigation may reveal the source of information, or a formal statement may be required as part of subsequent legal or disciplinary proceedings.

3.3 Anonymous Allegations

Staff are strongly encouraged to put their name to allegations whenever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful and harder to investigate thoroughly, but may be considered at the discretion of the Headteacher and Chair of Governors based on the seriousness of the issue and the credibility of the evidence.

4. Internal Reporting Procedure

4.1 Initial Disclosure

Staff should raise their concern in the first instance with a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT). If the matter is particularly sensitive or involves senior management, concerns should be escalated directly to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

Role / Person	Contact Details	When to Report to This Person
Headteacher (Joe Porter)	School Office / Headteacher Email	Initial formal disclosure for general school matters or SMT concerns.
Chair of Governors (via Clerk to Governors)	clerk@darell.richmond.sch.uk	If concern involves the Headteacher, or if previous disclosures were unaddressed.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	School DSL Contact Details	Immediate child safety or safeguarding disclosures.

5. Investigation Process & Timelines

5.1. **Acknowledgement:** The designated manager or governor receiving the disclosure will acknowledge receipt of the whistleblowing report in writing within **5 working days**.

5.2. **Appointment of Investigating Officer:** Depending on the nature of the allegation, the receiving officer will appoint an Investigating Officer. This may be a senior school staff member, an individual governor, or an independent external advisor.

5.3. **Investigation Timeline:** The Investigating Officer will conduct a thorough fact-finding investigation and deliver a comprehensive written report with findings and recommendations to the Headteacher or Governor Panel within **20 working days** of appointment.

5.4. **Feedback:** The whistleblower will be informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation in writing, subject to legal and confidentiality restrictions.

6. External Advice & Regulatory Outlets

While staff are strongly encouraged to exhaust internal procedures first, disclosures can be made to recognized external bodies where appropriate:

6.1 Independent Advice Line (Protect)

Staff seeking free, confidential advice on whistleblowing can contact Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work):

- Protect Helpline: 0203 117 2520
  Address: The Green House, 244-254 Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9DA
  Website: https://protect-advice.org.uk

6.2 Child Protection Concerns (NSPCC Helpline)

If a staff member feels unable to raise a child protection failure internally, or feels that past safeguarding concerns have been ignored, they should contact:

- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285
  Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

6.3 External Prescribed Bodies

Disclosures may also be made externally to prescribed regulatory authorities:

- Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills)
- Department for Education (DfE)
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- The Environment Agency / Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

7. Governance, Monitoring & Review

7.1. The Headteacher and Chair of Governors maintain oversight of all whistleblowing reports and investigations. A summary record of allegations and outcomes is maintained confidentially.

7.2. This policy will be formally reviewed by the Governing Body every two years, or earlier if required by changes in statutory legislation (such as Keeping Children Safe in Education guidelines).