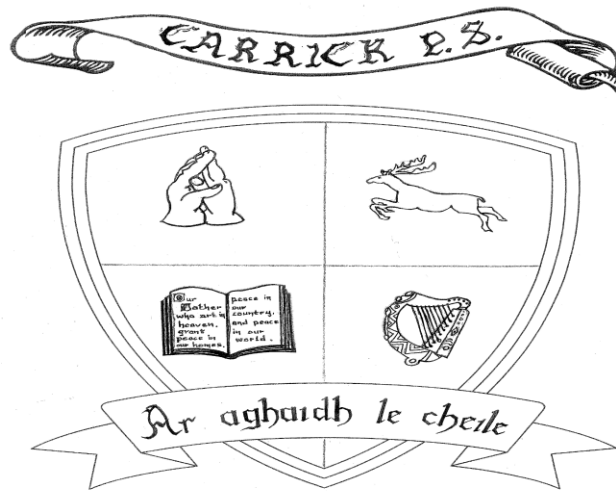


# Carrick Primary School



## Whistleblowing Policy

December 2023

## **Carrick Primary School**

### **Vision Statement**

Forward Together: “Ar aghaigh le chéile”.

### **Mission Statement**

In Carrick Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment, in which to realise and celebrate the academic and non-academic potential of all our pupils. We expect our pupils to work hard and encourage parents to assist us in laying the important foundations for future learning.

### **Aims**

#### **In our school we aim to:**

- Develop and strengthen each pupil’s understanding and love of Catholic values by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school;
- Create a safe, enjoyable learning environment in which effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided;
- Implement all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- Help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning;
- Value, respect and nurture every child in our care;
- Encourage pupils to respect themselves and others and to support and care for one another;
- Equip our children with the necessary life skills to enable them to participate in a fast changing society;
- Endorse the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child and work towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention;
- Involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school and in the holistic development of the children in our care.

## 1. Introduction

Carrick Primary School is committed to adopting high standards and will treat any malpractice as a serious matter. Employees are often the first to suspect or realise that there may be something wrong in their place of work but may not express concerns because of feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or fears of harassment or victimisation.

In line with our commitment to openness, probity and accountability, all employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of work in Carrick Primary School are encouraged to report them, and if necessary, in certain circumstances, on a confidential basis.

## 2. The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1988

2.1. The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order, also known as the **'Whistleblowing Act'** provides protection for employees who disclose information which may be regarded as confidential and which tends to show one or more of the following:

- A criminal offence has been, is being, or is about to be committed;
- The employer is failing to comply with his legal obligations;
- A miscarriage of justice has happened or is likely to happen;
- An individual's health and safety is being jeopardised;
- The environment is, or is likely to be damaged;
- Information falling into any one of the above categories which has been, is being, or is likely to be, deliberately concealed.

2.2. An employee must have a reasonable belief that a crime has or may be committed. An employee tribunal will decide whether or not such a belief was reasonable.

2.3. In deciding whether or not an employee has acted reasonably, all circumstances will be taken into consideration, in particular:

- The identity of the person to whom the disclosure is made;
- The seriousness of the relevant 'offence';
- Whether the 'offence' is continuing or is likely to occur in the future;
- Whether the disclosure is made in breach of a duty of confidentiality owed by the employer or any other person;
- Any action the employer or prescribed person might reasonably be expected to take as a result of a previous disclosure;
- Whether in making the disclosure to the employer, the employee complied with procedures applied by the employer.

2.4. Protection applies where the 'external' disclosures are made to such bodies as the police. In such instances Carrick Primary School would expect to be satisfied that internal sources had been advised first or that the employee believed they would have been victimised or evidence would have been concealed or destroyed. External disclosures must be made in good faith in the belief that allegations are substantially true and there should be no motive for personal gain.

### **3. Application of this policy**

- 3.1. This policy applies to all employees of Carrick Primary School both full and part-time, permanent or temporary. The policy aims to provide employees with an avenue to raise concerns and receive feedback on any actions taken. Employees may take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the response.

### **4. Protection of Employees**

- 4.1. The Board of Governors is committed to this policy. If any employee raises a concern in good faith, the CCMS will protect them against harassment or victimisation and will, if necessary, apply disciplinary procedures.
- 4.2. If an employee raises a genuine concern under this policy, he/she will not be at risk of losing their job or suffering retribution as a result.
- 4.3. In accordance with the Public Interest Disclosures (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 an employee cannot be dismissed or selected for redundancy as a result of making a disclosure in good faith.
- 4.4. Employees who already are the subject of disciplinary, grievance or redundancy procedures will not have those procedures stopped or suspended as a result of their whistleblowing.

### **5. Confidentiality**

- 5.1. The Board of Governors recognises that employees may want to raise concerns in confidence under this policy.
- 5.2. If an employee requests that their identities be protected, the Board of Governors will endeavour to honour this request.
- 5.3. If a situation arises where a concern cannot be resolved without revealing the employee's identity, the Board of Governors will discuss with the employee whether and how progress can be made. It may be that evidence, either written or verbal, is required in court proceedings.

### **6. Anonymous Reports**

- 6.1. The Board of Governors of Carrick Primary School encourage all employees to put their names to allegations because concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. However they shall be investigated with details of the findings and the actions recorded.

### **7. Independent advice**

- 7.1. If someone is unsure whether or how to raise a concern or if they want confidential advice at any stage, they may contact their union. They may also contact the independent charity **Public Concern at Work** on **0207 7404 6609** or by email at **[helpline@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:helpline@pcaw.co.uk)**. Their lawyers can explain the options and help to raise a concern

about malpractice at work. More information is available via the website [www.pcaaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaaw.co.uk).

## **8. Procedures for expressing concerns**

8.1. All whistleblowing matters should be reported in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and marked as Private and Confidential. Contact details are provided below:

**Mr Gerard Murdock**  
**Chairperson of the Board of Governors**  
**C/o Carrick Primary School, 61 Ballydesland Road, Burren, Warrenpoint. BT34 3QA**

8.2. This policy is intended to provide employees with an avenue to raise concerns within Carrick Primary School. If he / she is not satisfied and feels it is right to take the matter further, the list below shows possible contact points:

- The Chairperson of the Board of Governors or a representative thereof;
- Department of Education;
- His/her Solicitor;
- The PSNI;
- The Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

8.3. Prescribed persons are responsible for investigating allegations that fall under their prescribed role and for protecting the whistleblower and their interests whilst conducting an investigation.

## **9. How we will handle the matter**

9.1. Once a person has reported a concern, an assessment will be made in relation to what action should be taken. This may involve an informal review, an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. Where it is decided that a formal investigation is necessary, the overall responsibility for the investigation will lie with a nominated 'investigation officer'. In any event, the person who reported the concern will be told within 7 working days who is dealing with the matter, how they can contact that person, and whether further assistance may be needed. If they request it, a summary of the concern will be produced and the proposal for how the issue will be handled.

## **10. Abuse of this Procedure**

10.1. It is expected that employees will use these procedures with integrity. However, use of these procedures to:

- Make cynical, frivolous, mischievous vexatious allegations;
- Distract from other issues;

- Divert attention from or action in the application of other procedures;
- Defame or perpetrate malicious falsehoods,

is likely to constitute misconduct and render the complainant subject to investigation and disciplinary penalty.

## **11. Conclusion**

Whilst we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that the person raising the concern might wish, we will strive to handle the matter fairly and properly.

## **12. Review Procedure**

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and Governors. It will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required, to ensure that the information contained is appropriate and amendments will be made where necessary, following consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

Signed: Mr G Murdock (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Signed: Dr A Cassidy (Principal)

Date: December 2023

Review Date: December 2026