

CASTLEDYKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY



School	Castledyke Primary School
Federation	The Riverview Federation
Head of Federation	J Driscoll
Head of School	C Young
Designated Safeguarding Lead	A North and K Smith
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	H Bartlett
Safeguarding Governor	R Smith
Effective from	1 September 2026
Review date	September 2028, or earlier where legislation/guidance changes
Approved by	Governing Body

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1. Purpose

Castledyke Primary School is committed to maintaining an open, honest and safeguarding-focused culture in which everyone feels confident to speak up when something is wrong.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff, volunteers and others working with or for the school know:

- what whistleblowing means;
- what types of concerns should be raised;
- who they can speak to;
- what will happen when a concern is raised;
- how concerns about safeguarding practice can be escalated;
- how individuals will be protected when raising genuine concerns.

Castledyke will **not tolerate victimisation, bullying or detrimental treatment** of an individual who raises a genuine concern in good faith.

Our approach reflects the principle within KCSIE 2026 that **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** and that staff should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in safeguarding provision.

2. Our Castledyke Safeguarding Commitment

At Castledyke, we expect everyone to live our values:

READY

Ready to notice when something does not feel right.

RESPECTFUL

Respectful in the way concerns are raised, listened to and handled.

SAFE

Committed to speaking up whenever children, staff or others may be placed at risk.

Staff should never feel that raising a safeguarding concern is being disloyal to a colleague, the school or the federation.

Speaking up is part of safeguarding.

3. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is when an individual raises a concern about **wrongdoing, malpractice, unsafe practice or failures that are in the public interest**.

This may include concerns about:

- illegal activity;
- serious breaches of legal or statutory duties;
- serious health and safety concerns;
- fraud or financial wrongdoing;
- serious professional misconduct;
- deliberate concealment of wrongdoing;
- unsafe safeguarding practice;
- failures to follow safeguarding procedures;
- repeated failures to act on safeguarding concerns;
- failures in the school's arrangements for protecting children;
- serious weaknesses in online safety, filtering or monitoring arrangements.

A person raising a concern does **not** need to prove that wrongdoing has occurred.

They should share what they know, what they have observed and why they are concerned.

The responsibility for determining what further investigation or action is required rests with the appropriate person within the school or federation.

4. Whistleblowing and Safeguarding

Whistleblowing is particularly important in safeguarding.

KCSIE 2026 makes clear that staff should be able to raise concerns about **poor or unsafe safeguarding practice and potential failures in safeguarding provision**.

Examples could include:

- safeguarding concerns repeatedly not being acted upon;
- staff being discouraged from reporting concerns;
- safeguarding records not being maintained appropriately;
- concerns about a child being repeatedly overlooked;
- failures to follow the school's Child Protection Policy;
- concerns about the effectiveness of safeguarding leadership;
- concerns that online safety arrangements are inadequate;
- concerns that filtering or monitoring weaknesses are not being addressed;
- a culture in which staff do not feel able to speak up;
- deliberate attempts to conceal safeguarding concerns.

Important

Where a member of staff has an **immediate concern about a child**, they must follow the school's normal safeguarding procedures without delay.

This means reporting the concern to:

DSLs – A North or K Smith

or

Deputy DSL – H Bartlett

Staff should not wait for a whistleblowing investigation before taking action to protect a child.

5. Whistleblowing is Different from a Safeguarding Allegation

It is important that staff understand the difference.

If your concern is:

"I am concerned that a member of staff may have harmed a child or may pose a risk of harm."

This should be reported immediately through the school's **Managing Allegations Against Staff / Child Protection procedures**.

If your concern is:

"I am concerned that safeguarding practice within the school is unsafe or that safeguarding concerns are not being appropriately dealt with."

This may constitute a **whistleblowing concern**.

There may be circumstances where both procedures apply.

Staff should **never attempt to decide this themselves**. Report the concern and allow the DSL/senior leader to determine the appropriate process.

6. Who Can Raise a Concern?

Castledyke encourages concerns to be raised by:

- teachers;

- support staff;
- office staff;
- lunchtime and wraparound staff;
- supply and agency staff;
- volunteers;
- trainees and apprentices;
- contractors;
- governors;
- other individuals working within or alongside the school.

A person does not have to be certain that something is wrong before raising a concern.

If something does not feel right, speak up.

7. How to Raise a Concern

Normally, concerns should be raised with an appropriate member of the school's leadership team.

Safeguarding concern

A North /K Smith – DSLs

H Bartlett – Deputy DSL

General whistleblowing concern

C Young – Head of School

Escalation

J Driscoll – Head of Federation

Governance

R Smith – Safeguarding Governor

Where appropriate, the Chair of Governors should also be involved.

Chair of Governors - P Swann

Staff may raise concerns verbally in the first instance, but should provide a written account where possible.

The written account should include:

- what has happened;
- what the individual has seen or heard;

- dates and times where known;
- who is involved;
- why they are concerned;
- whether the concern has previously been raised;
- what response was received.

Staff should **not conduct their own investigation**.

8. What if the Concern is About the Head of School?

If the concern relates to **C Young, Head of School**, the individual should **not report the concern to C Young**.

Instead, the concern should be raised with:

J Driscoll – Head of Federation

and/or

the appropriate governing body route, including the Safeguarding Governor, R Smith, or Chair of Governors P Swann

KCSIE makes specific provision for concerns about the headteacher to be referred to the chair of governors or equivalent rather than to the headteacher themselves.

9. What if the Concern is About the DSL?

If the concern relates to:

K Smith or A North – DSLs

the concern should be raised with:

C Young – Head of School

or

J Driscoll – Head of Federation

depending on the circumstances.

If the concern involves both the DSL and Head of School, the concern should be escalated directly to the **Head of Federation and/or appropriate governing body route**.

10. What if the Concern is About the Head of Federation?

If the concern relates to:

J Driscoll – Head of Federation

the individual should use the appropriate **governing body route**, including the Safeguarding Governor or Chair of Governors.

The person raising the concern should not be expected to report a concern to the person who is the subject of that concern.

11. Confidentiality

Castledyke will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality.

Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to:

- safeguard children;
- investigate the concern;
- comply with legal duties;
- take appropriate action.

Staff should not discuss whistleblowing concerns with colleagues who do not need to know.

Where confidentiality cannot be maintained because information must legally be shared, this will be handled sensitively wherever possible.

12. Anonymous Concerns

Anonymous concerns can be raised.

However, staff are encouraged to provide their identity where possible because this allows the school to:

- seek clarification;
- ask further questions;
- investigate more effectively;
- provide appropriate feedback;
- offer support to the person raising the concern.

Anonymous concerns will still be considered and assessed according to their seriousness.

13. Protection for Whistleblowers

Castledyke will not tolerate:

- bullying;
- harassment;
- intimidation;
- victimisation;
- unfair treatment;
- detrimental treatment;

because someone has raised a genuine concern.

UK whistleblowing legislation provides protection in certain circumstances for workers who make qualifying protected disclosures. Staff should therefore be encouraged to raise concerns appropriately rather than remaining silent.

The DfE's 2026 whistleblowing guidance also recommends that schools have clear procedures, provide appropriate training and support, maintain confidentiality where requested and make clear that victimisation is unacceptable.

14. What Happens When a Concern is Raised?

Castledyke will:

1. Listen

The concern will be taken seriously.

2. Assess

The appropriate leader will consider:

- the nature of the concern;
- whether a child or adult is at immediate risk;
- whether safeguarding procedures apply;
- whether another statutory procedure is required.

3. Escalate

Where necessary, the concern may be referred to:

- Children's Social Care;
- the Police;

- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- the Local Authority;
- the Governing Body;
- the Federation;
- another appropriate statutory or regulatory body.

4. Investigate

Where appropriate, an impartial investigation will be undertaken.

The person raising the concern should **not investigate the matter themselves**.

5. Record

The school will maintain appropriate confidential records of:

- the concern;
- actions taken;
- decisions;
- rationale for decisions;
- referrals;
- outcomes.

This is particularly important for safeguarding concerns.

KCSIE 2026 emphasises the importance of recording safeguarding concerns, including actions taken, decisions made, rationale and outcomes.

15. If You Feel Your Concern Has Not Been Addressed

If a member of staff believes that their genuine concern has not been appropriately addressed, they should escalate it.

The route at Castledyke is:

Staff member

↓

DSL / Deputy DSL / Head of School

↓

Head of Federation

↓

Safeguarding Governor / Chair of Governors

Where the concern relates to one of the people in the route, the individual should simply **move to the next appropriate level**.

Staff should not feel that they have to repeatedly report a concern to someone who has already failed to address it.

16. External Whistleblowing Route – NSPCC

KCSIE 2026 specifically identifies the **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line** as an alternative route for staff who:

- feel unable to raise concerns internally; or
- have concerns about the way a safeguarding concern is being handled.

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

Telephone: 0800 028 0285

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC is also listed by the Government as a prescribed person for concerns relating to child welfare and protection.

The current published contact information states that the line operates:

Monday–Friday: 8am–8pm

Weekends: 9am–6pm

17. Other External Routes

Depending on the nature of the concern, other external routes may include:

- the Local Authority;
- Children's Social Care;
- the Police;
- the LADO;
- Ofsted;
- the Department for Education;
- another appropriate prescribed person.

The Government publishes a current list of prescribed people and bodies for whistleblowing disclosures.

Staff should seek advice if they are unsure which external route is appropriate.

18. Immediate Danger

Whistleblowing procedures must **never delay action to protect a child**.

If a child is in immediate danger:

Call 999.

If there is a safeguarding concern that is not an emergency, follow Castledyke's safeguarding procedures and report to the DSL/deputy without delay.

Government guidance confirms that concerns about a child's safety should be reported even where the person reporting does not have certainty that abuse has occurred.

19. Deliberately False or Malicious Concerns

Castledyke wants staff to feel safe to raise concerns.

A concern will **not** be treated as misconduct simply because an investigation does not substantiate it.

However, deliberately malicious, knowingly false or deliberately misleading allegations may be addressed under the appropriate staff disciplinary procedures.

This distinction is important:

Good-faith reporting is encouraged. Deliberate fabrication is not.

20. Staff Training and Communication

All staff will be made aware of Castledyke's whistleblowing arrangements through:

- induction;
- safeguarding training;
- safeguarding updates;
- staff meetings;
- the staff handbook/policy framework;
- annual safeguarding updates.

Staff should know:

1. **Who the DSL is.**
2. **Who the Deputy DSLs are.**
3. **How to report a safeguarding concern.**
4. **How to raise concerns about safeguarding practice.**
5. **How to escalate a concern.**
6. **What to do if the concern involves a member of senior leadership.**
7. **How to access the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.**

This supports KCSIE 2026's expectation that staff understand the school's safeguarding arrangements and know how to raise concerns about safeguarding practice.

21. Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Federation – J Driscoll

Responsible for:

- providing federation-level oversight;
- ensuring concerns involving the Head of School can be appropriately escalated;
- ensuring concerns are dealt with fairly and appropriately.

Head of School – C Young

Responsible for:

- promoting an open culture;
- ensuring staff know how to raise concerns;
- responding appropriately to whistleblowing concerns;
- ensuring concerns are escalated where necessary.

DSL – K Smith/A North

Responsible for:

- leading safeguarding responses;
- ensuring safeguarding concerns are acted upon;
- ensuring appropriate referrals are made;
- supporting staff who raise safeguarding concerns.

Deputy DSL – H Bartlett

Responsible for:

- providing an alternative safeguarding reporting route;
- supporting the DSL;

- responding to safeguarding concerns when the DSL is unavailable or when appropriate.

Safeguarding Governor – R Smith

Responsible for:

- providing appropriate safeguarding challenge and oversight;
- supporting appropriate escalation where concerns involve senior leaders;
- ensuring governors have appropriate assurance regarding safeguarding arrangements.

All Staff

Every member of staff is responsible for:

Noticing.

Speaking up.

Reporting.

Recording.

Following the procedure.

22. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually or sooner where there are significant changes to:

- KCSIE;
- safeguarding legislation;
- employment legislation;
- local safeguarding arrangements;
- federation structures;
- school procedures.

The next scheduled review is:

September 2028

APPENDIX 1

CASTLEDYKE WHISTLEBLOWING – QUICK REFERENCE

I HAVE A CONCERN

Something doesn't feel right.



IS A CHILD AT RISK?

Report immediately to:

A North / K Smith – DSL

H Bartlett – Deputy DSL



IS IT A CONCERN ABOUT SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE?

Raise it with:

C Young – Head of School



IS THE CONCERN ABOUT C YOUNG?

Go to:

J Driscoll – Head of Federation

and/or the appropriate **Governing Body** route



HAS YOUR CONCERN NOT BEEN ADDRESSED?

Escalate to:

Head of Federation / Safeguarding Governor / Chair of Governors



STILL UNABLE TO RAISE THE CONCERN INTERNALLY?

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

0800 028 0285

help@nspcc.org.uk

APPENDIX 2

CASTLEDYKE KEY CONTACTS

Role	Name
School	Castledyke Primary School
Federation	The Riverview Federation
Head of Federation	J Driscoll
Head of School	C Young
Designated Safeguarding Leads	A North and K Smith
Deputy DSL	H Bartlett
Safeguarding Governor	R Smith

External safeguarding whistleblowing

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285

help@nspcc.org.uk

Emergency safeguarding

999 where a child or other person is in immediate danger.

CASTLEDYKE REMEMBER

READY • RESPECTFUL • SAFE

READY to notice.

RESPECTFUL when raising and receiving concerns.

SAFE enough to speak up.

If you are worried about a child, report it.

If you are worried about safeguarding practice, speak up.

If you feel you cannot speak up internally, there are external routes available.