



## **Whistleblower (Protected Disclosures) Policy**

### **Kingsland National School, Boyle, Co. Roscommon.**

**Date of Ratification: 10/12/2025**

#### **1. Purpose of this Policy**

The purpose of this Whistleblower (Protected Disclosures) Policy is to:

- Encourage staff and related workers to raise genuine concerns about wrongdoing within the school.
- Provide a safe and confidential way to report concerns.
- Protect individuals who disclose such concerns from penalisation.
- Ensure the Board of Management responds appropriately, fairly, and promptly.

This policy applies to all workers within the school community including employees, contractors, volunteers, student teachers, and any person working under the authority of the school.

#### **2. Legislative Context**

This policy is underpinned by:

- **Protected Disclosures Act 2014**
- **Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022**
- **Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2019–2023 (and subsequent updates)**
- Relevant **Department of Education circulars** on reporting obligations and standards of behaviour.

#### **3. What is a Protected Disclosure?**

A protected disclosure is information which, in the reasonable belief of the person making it, shows or tends to show wrongdoing, and which came to the worker's attention in connection with their employment or role.

##### **3.1 Examples of Wrongdoing**

Wrongdoing includes (but is not limited to):

- Commission of a criminal offence
- Failure to comply with legal obligations
- Miscarriage of justice
- Endangerment to health and safety of staff or pupils

- Damage to the environment
- Misuse or waste of public funds
- Abuse of authority
- Gross mismanagement
- Concealment or destruction of information relating to any of the above.

This policy **does not** cover ordinary complaints, grievances, or interpersonal issues (these fall under other school policies such as grievance or dignity-at-work procedures).

#### **4. Protection for Whistleblowers**

Any person who makes a protected disclosure is entitled to:

- **Confidentiality** (identity will not be disclosed except in very limited circumstances required by law)
- **Protection from penalisation**, including dismissal, demotion, disciplinary sanction, or disadvantage
- **Protection from civil liability**
- Access to internal and external reporting channels

A disclosure made in good faith will **not** result in adverse consequences for the worker, even if the concern is not upheld after investigation.

#### **5. Who Can Make a Disclosure?**

A protected disclosure may be made by:

- Any **employee**, including teachers, SNAs, cleaners, secretaries
- **Board of Management members**
- **Student teachers**, volunteers, coaches or contracted service providers
- Anyone working under the direction of the school

#### **6. To Whom Should a Disclosure Be Made?**

Because this is a small school, clear internal routes are essential.

##### **6.1 Internal Reporting Channels**

Concerns should be reported, in the first instance, to:

##### **Designated Person for Protected Disclosures:**

- **The Chairperson of the Board of Management**

If the concern relates to the Chairperson, it may be directed to:

##### **Alternate Receiver:**

- **The Principal / another nominated Board member**

Reports may be made in writing, in person, or orally (with a written record kept).

#### **7. Making a Disclosure**

A disclosure should contain:

1. **A description of the alleged wrongdoing**
2. **Dates, times, people involved**, or other relevant information

3. **Any evidence** available to support the concern
4. Whether the concern has already been raised and any response received

The school does **not** require the whistleblower to prove wrongdoing — only to have a **reasonable belief** that it is occurring.

## 8. How the School Will Respond

Upon receiving a disclosure, the Board (or its designated person) will:

1. **Acknowledge receipt** within 7 days
2. **Conduct a preliminary assessment** to determine:
  - if the report falls under the Protected Disclosures Act,
  - if a full investigation is warranted
3. **Initiate an appropriate investigation**, which may be:
  - internal
  - external independent investigator
  - referral to appropriate statutory authorities
4. Provide the whistleblower with **feedback** within a reasonable timeframe (usually within 3 months).
5. Conclude the process with an outcome summary, ensuring confidentiality.

## 9. Confidentiality Measures

The school is committed to maintaining confidentiality and will:

- Keep the whistleblower's identity confidential unless legally required otherwise
- Limit access to disclosure records to designated persons
- Store all records securely and separately from personnel files

Exceptions may arise where:

- Identity disclosure is essential to a fair investigation
- Required by law
- Requested explicitly by the whistleblower

If identity must be disclosed, the whistleblower will be **informed in advance**.

## 10. Malicious or Vexatious Reporting

While genuine disclosures are protected, deliberately false or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action. This does not include disclosures made in error or in good faith.

## 11. Record Keeping

The Board of Management will maintain confidential records of:

- The disclosure
- How it was handled
- Investigation outcomes
- Communications with the whistleblower

Records will be retained in accordance with data protection requirements.

## **12. Support for Staff**

Workers who make protected disclosures may access:

- Employee Assistance Services (where applicable)
- INTO / union support
- Confidential advisory services
- External channels provided under the Act (e.g., Ombudsman, Department of Education, etc.)

## **13. Communication of Policy**

This policy will be:

- Circulated to all staff annually
- Available on the school website and/or staff shared drive
- Included in induction for new workers

## **14. Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

**Date:** 10/12/25

**Chairperson:** \_\_\_\_\_, Brendan Beirne.

**Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_, Sylvia Cunniffe.

**Review Date: December 2028**

**Protected Disclosures (Whistleblower) Reporting Form**  
**Kingsland National School, Boyle, Co. Roscommon.**  
**Confidential**

**1. Person Making the Disclosure**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Leave blank if you wish to remain anonymous, though this may affect the ability to investigate fully.)*

**Role in the school:**

Teacher     SNA     Secretary     Caretaker

Student Teacher     Coach/Volunteer     Contractor     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact details (optional):**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Date of Disclosure**

**Date submitting this form:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Details of the Alleged Wrongdoing**

**Describe the concern or alleged wrongdoing:**

*(Include what happened, where it occurred, and why you believe it is wrongdoing.)*

---

---

---

---

---

**When did the issue occur (dates/times if known)?**

---

---

---

---

---

**Who was involved (persons, roles, departments)?**

---

---

---

---

---

**Are there witnesses who may be able to provide supporting information?**

Yes       No

If yes, please list (optional):

---

---

---

**4. Supporting Evidence**

Please describe any evidence you can provide (documents, emails, photographs, timelines, etc.):

---

---

---

- Evidence is attached
- Evidence will be provided separately
- No evidence available, but the concern is made in good faith

**5. Has this matter been raised previously?**

Yes       No

If yes, please provide details including the person notified and any response received:

---

---

---

**6. Confidentiality**

Do you request that your identity be kept confidential?

Yes       No

(We will make every effort to maintain confidentiality except where disclosure is required by law or necessary for fair investigation.)

**7. Declaration**

I confirm that I am making this disclosure in good faith and in the reasonable belief that the information provided shows or tends to show wrongdoing.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

*(If submitting anonymously, leave blank.)*

**8. For Official Use Only (Board of Management)**

*(To be completed by the Chairperson / Designated Person)*

**Date received:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Received by (name):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgement issued to discloser:**

Yes     No    Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Preliminary assessment completed:**

Yes     No    Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Action decided:**

Investigation initiated

Referred to external authority

No further action

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

---

---

---

---

---

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Role:** \_\_\_\_\_