



Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire
Ballyleague
Co Roscommon
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Roll Number 18061T
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Protected Disclosure Policy

Introduction

This policy relates to the making of a protected disclosure, or as it is more commonly known, “whistleblowing.” Whistleblowing occurs when a worker raises a serious concern or discloses information which relates to wrongdoing, illegal practices or unethical conduct which come to his/her attention through work.

Rationale

This policy has been drawn up to comply with the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 which was enacted on 15th July 2015.

Commitment

The Board of Management of this school is committed to maintaining an open culture with the highest standards of honesty and accountability.

Aims of the policy

The aims of this policy are:

- To encourage workers to feel confident and safe in raising concerns and disclosing information
- To provide avenues for workers to raise concerns in confidence and to receive feedback on any action taken
- To ensure that workers receive a response to their concerns and information disclosed
- To reassure workers that they will be protected from penalisation or any threat of penalisation.

Confidentiality

The Board of Management is committed to protecting the identity of the worker raising a concern and ensures that relevant disclosures are treated in confidence. However, there are circumstances, as outlined in the Act, where confidentiality cannot be maintained. Should such a situation arise, the Board will inform the worker that his/her identity may be disclosed.

Anonymous raising of concerns

A concern may be raised anonymously, but on a practical level it may be difficult to investigate such a concern. The Board encourages workers to put their names to concerns or disclosures

as it will be easier to assess the disclosure, carry out an investigation and take action, if appropriate.

“Relevant Wrongdoings”

Relevant Wrongdoings are defined exhaustively in the act and include the following:

The commission of an offence

Non-compliance with a legal obligation

Threats to Health & Safety

Misuse of Public Monies

Concealment or destruction of information relating to any of the foregoing

Making a disclosure

The aim of this policy is to provide an avenue within this school to deal with concerns or disclosures in regard to wrongdoing. If you as a member of staff have a genuine or reasonable concern that there is malpractice in the school you should report it to the principal. The Board is confident that issues can be dealt with “in house” and strongly encourages workers to report concerns internally.

If this is not appropriate or possible you should then report it to the chairperson of the BOM, or failing that to the BOM itself. Workplace grievances should be reported in the normal manner and are not covered by this policy.

It should be noted that while internal reporting is encouraged you have the option to raise concerns outside of line management and report to the prescribed person namely the Secretary General of the D.E.S.

The Board acknowledges that there may be circumstances where a worker wishes to make a disclosure externally. Sections 22 to 28 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 provide for a number of avenues in this regard.

While a worker need only have a reasonable belief as to wrongdoing to make a disclosure internally, different and potentially more onerous obligations apply when making an external disclosure, depending on to whom the disclosure is made.

What protections are available to whistle blowers?

Among the protections are;

Protection from dismissal

Up to 5 years remuneration for unfair dismissal

Protection of identity (subject to certain exceptions)

Protection from penalisation by the school Board of Management

Communication

This policy will be communicated to workers by being displayed on the staff noticeboard and on the school website.

Review

The policy will be reviewed at the end of the 2022/23 school year.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on

Chairperson's signature Brenda Reynolds

Date 21/10/2021

Principal/secretary to the Board of Management:

Cairnne Fallon

Date: 21.10.21

