



# St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust

## WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

### 1 Preamble

The 22 schools and central team which form the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust were founded by and form part of the Catholic Church. In addition to the Church's funds which established the schools, it is sustained in its mission by receipt of public funds through the Education Funding Agency. Accordingly, it is accountable to the Catholic community of which it is a part and which provided the school and the central office and to the public whose funds it expends.

The Academy Trust is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees and others with whom we deal, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Trust's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

This policy makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage. This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the school or central office in the first instance so that it is not necessary to resort to outside agencies.

### 2 Aims and Scope of this Policy

There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment. This policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- conduct which is an offence, a breach of the law or contrary to Church teaching;
- disclosures related to miscarriages of justice;
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees;
- damage to the environment;
- the unauthorised use of public or Church funds;
- possible fraud and corruption;
- abuse of students; or
- other unethical or immoral conduct.

Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees, governors or directors of the Academy Trust in any of the schools, central office or others acting on behalf of the Trust, its central office or any of its schools can be reported under this policy. This may be something that makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the values, beliefs and standards to which the school subscribes; is against the Academy Trust instrument of government or policies; falls below established standards of practice; or amounts to improper conduct.

### 3 Safeguards

The Academy Trust will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence you or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that might affect you.

#### **4 Confidentiality**

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness. You also have a duty to observe this confidentiality.

#### **5 Anonymous Allegations**

You are encouraged to put your name to your allegation wherever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the Academy Trust. In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account will include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised;
- the credibility of the concern and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

#### **6 Untrue Allegations**

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

#### **7 How to Raise a Concern**

If you reasonably believe that you have discovered serious malpractice within the Academy Trust, its central office or any of its schools, you should ideally raise these concerns with your line manager. However, if, for whatever reason this is not possible or appropriate, you should contact the CEO if you are in the central team or the Head Teacher if you are in a school.

You will be given the opportunity to discuss your suspicions and an appropriate person will be designated as investigating officer, who will arrange for an investigation to take place.

If you suspect that the CEO or Head Teacher may be involved in the malpractice then you should contact the Chair of the Trust or the Chair of the Governing Body accordingly. If you also suspect involvement by the Chair of the Trust or the Chair of the Governing Body, then you should contact the Diocesan Director of Education.

Within ten working days of your initial meeting, the investigating officer will write to confirm the details of your concern and that an investigation will take place. Throughout the investigation, you will be kept informed of progress and you will normally be advised of the eventual outcome, subject to third party rights. All correspondence will be addressed to your home. If a meeting is needed, it may be arranged

off site if you wish, and a union representative or a friend may accompany you. Although records will need to be kept as the enquiries progress, these will be of an anonymous nature.

There can be no prescribed time limits for completion of the investigative process, but it will obviously be in the interests of all concerned if the issue is resolved without delay.

If you have any complaint about the way in which the investigation is being handled then you should raise this with the designated investigating officer in the first instance. If the complaint remains unresolved then you may contact the Diocesan Director of Education with your concerns.

When the investigation is complete a report will be presented to the board of directors or the governing body, which will decide upon the appropriate course of action. Subject to any relevant legal constraints, you will be informed of the action to be taken. If you do not agree with the outcome then you will have seven days in which to make your concerns known to the board of directors or governing body, via the Chair of the Trust or the Diocesan Director of Education. If you remain dissatisfied with the response from the board of directors or the governing body, then you may consider contacting the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, who has the power to intervene if the board of directors or governing body appears to be acting unreasonably. You should be aware, however, that this course of action could have serious implications for the Academy trust and/or schools.

At no stage should you contact the media without the written permission of the Chair of the Board of Directors. Such action would be a breach of confidentiality and could result in disciplinary proceedings against you.

## **8 List of Contacts**

Chair of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust: Sarah Noon

Office for correspondence:

Unit 5

Charnwood Edge Business Park

Syston Road

Cossington

LE7 4UZ

CEO of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust: Neil Lockyer

Office for correspondence:

Unit 5

Charnwood Edge Business Park

Syston Road

Cossington

LE7 4UZ

Director of Education: Peter Giorgio

Diocesan Education Service

Diocesan Centre

Mornington Crescent

Derby DE22 4BD

01332 293833

Secretary of State for Education

Department for Education

Castle View House

East Lane

Runcorn

Cheshire WA7 2GJ

0370 000 2288

## Schools

Sacred Heart Catholic Academy  
Mere Close  
Leicester  
LE5 3H  
01162624418  
Chair of Governors      Mr E Hayes

St Joseph's Catholic Academy  
Armada Drive  
Leicester  
Le5 1HF  
01162416197  
Chair of Governors      Mrs K Howells

St Thomas More Catholic Academy  
Newstead Road  
Leicester  
LE2 3TA  
01162706365  
Chair of Governors      Mrs C Gribbon

St Josephs Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Coventry Road  
Market Harborough  
Leicestershire  
LE16 9BZ  
01858 465359  
Chair of Governors      Mr M McGowan

St John Fisher Catholic Academy  
Shenley Road  
Wigston  
Leicestershire  
LE18 3 QL  
01162882203  
Chair of Governors      Mr J Stanley

Christ the King Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Glenfield Road  
Leicester  
LE3 6DF  
0116 285 7261  
Chair of Governors      Mr M Wakeley

Holy Cross Catholic School, a Voluntary Academy  
Stonesby Ave  
Leicester  
LE2 6TY  
01162 833135  
Chair of Governors      Fr D Rocks

St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Harrison Road  
Leicester  
LE4 6QN  
01162 661149  
Chair of Governors      Mr D Niven

English Martyrs' Catholic School, A Voluntary Academy  
Anstey Lane  
Leicester  
LE4 0JF  
0116 2428880  
Chair of Governors      Mrs J Washington

St Paul's Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Spencefield Lane  
Evington Leicester  
LE5 6HN  
0116 241 4057  
Chair of Governors      Mrs L O'Brien

St Peters Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Mill Lane  
Earl Shilton  
LE9 7AW  
01455 843840  
Chair of Governors      Mrs Z Morgan

Bishop Ellis Catholic Primary School  
Barkby Thorpe Lane  
Thurmaston  
Leicester  
LE4 8GP  
01162 695510  
Chair of Governors      Mrs EO'heagan

St Francis Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy  
Dalby Road  
Melton Mowbray  
LE13 0BP  
01664562891  
Chair of Governors      Mr J Morgan

St Charles' Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy  
Bosworth Road  
Measham  
Swadlincote  
DE12 7LQ  
01530 270572  
Chair of Governors      Mr N Pearce

St. Clare's Primary School, a Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Convent Drive  
Coalville  
LE67 3SF  
01530 837747  
Chair of Governors      tbc

Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Beacon Road  
Loughborough  
LE11 2BG  
01509 212204  
Chair of Governors      Mr F Fey

St Mary's Catholic School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Hastings Road  
Loughborough  
LE11 0AX  
01509 212621  
Chair of Governors      Mr L Rollason

St Winifred's Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Britannia Street  
Shepshed  
LE12 9AE  
01509 503353  
Chair of Governors      Mrs C Lawe

Holy Cross School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Parsonwood Hill,  
Whitwick  
LE67 5AT  
01530 832799  
Chair of Governors      Mrs L Kilday

De Lisle College, a Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Thorpe Hill  
Loughborough  
LE11 4SQ  
01509 268 739  
Chair of Governors      Mrs E Smith / Mrs M Jane

St Peters Catholic Primary School  
London Road  
Hinckley  
LE10 1 HJ  
01455 634087  
Chair of Governors      Mr J Connolly

St Martins Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Stoke Golding  
Nuneaton  
CV13 6HT  
01455 212386  
Chair of Governors      Mr J Connolly