



MURRAY PARK SCHOOL

Title of Policy	Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy
Date of adoption	Autumn 2022
Originator	Heather Halford
Date of review	Autumn 2027
Additional information	See also Budget Managers Handbook Code of Conduct Policy

Introduction

This policy applies to all employees, governors and other individuals performing functions in relation to the organisation, such as agency workers and contractors.

It is important to the school that there are proper procedures in place to guard against fraud and corruption and ensure best use of public funds. If there are any concerns that cannot be raised through the normal channels then the Whistleblowing policy should be followed.

Background

The Department for Education's (DfE) Scheme for Financing Schools (March 2018) includes the following provision, at paragraph 2.17 –

“All schools must have a robust system of controls to safeguard themselves against fraudulent or improper use of public money and assets.

The governing body and head teacher must inform all staff of school policies and procedures related to fraud and theft, the controls in place to prevent them; and the consequences of breaching these controls. This information must also be included in induction for new school staff and governors.”

In addition, when completing the School's Financial Value Standard the governors are asked if there are adequate arrangements in place to guard against fraud and theft by staff, contractors and suppliers and note any instance of fraud or theft detected in the last 12 months.

This policy document assists the Governing Body in meeting these requirements.

Fraud is a criminal offence. The Fraud Act 2006 defines 'fraud' as:

1. Deceit, the intention to deceive or secrecy: and
2. (a) an actual loss or gain;
(b) The intent to cause loss to another or expose them to the risk of it;
3. Dishonesty.

Offences of fraud can include abuse of position, making of a false statements, failure to disclose information, obtaining services dishonestly, deception, theft, misappropriation, embezzlement, forgery, corruption, extortion, false accounting, false representation, concealment of material facts, acts of conspiracy, collusion and aiding and abetting any act of dishonesty.

Bribery is a criminal offence and the Bribery Act 2010 introduces a clearer regime for tackling bribery. A definition is: inducement for an action which is illegal, unethical or a breach of trust. Inducements can take the form of gifts, loans, fees, rewards or other advantages.

Policy Statement on anti-fraud and corruption

The Governors are committed to fighting fraud with high ethical and moral standards and recognise that any fraud perpetrated against the school is costly, both in financial terms and reputation. The governors are therefore committed to take action to prevent, detect and deter fraud, corruption and bribery in all its activities.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Whistleblowing Policy and ~~Staff Handbook~~ Code of Conduct Policy (section covering 'Honesty and Integrity') and the Financial Procedures manual and Schedule of Financial delegation.

The school will ensure probity in administration and governance by taking positive action against all forms of fraud, corruption or bribery affecting school business whether it is from internal or external sources.

The Governing Body has a legal responsibility for the school budget and will ensure a sound system of internal control is in place in the use of delegated and other funds given to the school.

The Headteacher and the Senior Leadership team are responsible for ensuring that there are sound systems of financial control designed to minimise the risk of fraud or error.

All school staff are expected to report any cases of suspected fraud, no matter how trivial they may seem either to their manager or through the whistleblowing process.

All staff is expected to be fully accountable during their employment with the school, to follow the school's policies, financial procedures and any relevant professional code and to comply with all laws and regulations applicable to the school's business.

As stewards of public funds, staff must have, and be seen to have, high standards of personal integrity. Staff should not accept personal gifts, hospitality, or benefits of any kind from a third party that may be seen to compromise that integrity and does not follow the ~~Staff Handbook~~ Code of Conduct around 'Honesty and Integrity'.

Detection

Central Midlands Audit Partnership undertake a school audit in accordance with the Schools Financial Value Statement and report on the effectiveness of the financial controls in the schools visited.

Detective checks and balances will be designed into all relevant systems and applied consistently, including segregation of duties, reconciliation procedures, random checking of transactions and a regular review of the Financial Procedures manual.

Suspect patterns of behaviour among staff (especially if dealing with financial transactions) should be investigated. For example, living beyond apparent means, taking few holidays, regularly working alone out of normal hours and resistance to delegation. Any indication of addiction to drugs, alcohol or gambling should be addressed promptly, for the welfare of the individual and to minimise the risks to the school.

Reporting Suspicions and Investigation

Where any matter that might constitute fraud, theft, corruption or bribery comes to the attention of any governor or member of the school staff contact should be made with the Headteacher, Director of Finance & Support Services, Chair of Governors or Chair of Finance.

If the concern is about either the Headteacher or the Governors the advice in the Whistleblowing Policy should be followed.

The first course of action will be to identify the most suitable person to undertake a preliminary fact finding investigation. In practice this will normally be the Headteacher who can then nominate a member of SLT to conduct the investigation.

Deterrence

The Governing Body views fraud as a serious offence against the school and employees will face disciplinary action if there is evidence to support any allegation of fraud. Disciplinary

action may be taken in addition to, any criminal proceedings, depending on the circumstances of each case.

The Governing Body is committed to deterring potential cases of fraud through the implementation of robust systems and procedures and will act quickly and efficiently where fraud is alleged, leading to the most appropriate outcome.

It will take all steps possible to ensure appropriate penalties are sought in cases where fraud is proven, strenuously attempt recovery of any monies lost as a result of fraud and thoroughly assess the systems and processes to ensure fraud is minimised in future.

Fraud response procedure

- Aim to prevent further loss.
- Notify bank & Action Fraud if bank account/details have been compromised.
- The Headteacher or a member of SLT will investigate the allegations.
- Take appropriate action against those responsible.
- Inform the police (this may depend on the severity and nature of fraud).
- Endeavour to recover losses.
- Review the incident, put in measures to prevent a recurrence and any action needed to strengthen future responses to fraud.

Fraud Awareness Training

Regular updates will be emailed to all staff which will inform staff of existing and new threats or scams that are circulating.