

## **Who or what is Whisper?**

This service was created by SWGfL (South West Grid for Learning) as part of their online safety services for schools

The service consists of a website button / link that launches an online dialogue-box to capture information or details for anyone who needs to report issues to the school. That information is then sent to an email address nominated by the school. Alternatively you a text service is available.

Both services can be regarded as anonymous if the user chooses to withhold their personal information.

Sharing things that upset you is not always an easy thing to do. SWGL Whisper is designed to act as another way you can tell a responsible adult at the school about any issues that you or others might be having. Sometimes that way might be easier than a face to face meeting.

### **This might include:**

- You or someone else being bullied
- If you feel somebody at the school is at risk
- If you have a problem that you need to talk about to somebody

Please don't use bad language as we may not receive your message: the school systems may filter and block things like swear words and stop your message getting to the Whisper account.

## **FAQs**

### **Who is the service for?**

The service is an open reporting route for any concerns that a whole school community might have, but in particular issues that affect the safety and well-being of children, young people and staff. It can be used by students, pupils, parents, local community or staff; or indeed anyone who needs to report an issue to the school anonymously.

### **Is reporting to whisper really anonymous**

SWGfL Whisper has been designed for users to be able to report electronically and in private through an online or SMS system that goes to staff responsible for dealing with your report. Your personal details are not shared or stored as part of that process, unless you choose to include them.

When you make a report, you have the choice of including your personal or contact details or reporting anonymously. The message that the school receives may have your information if you have sent it.

The SWGfL Whisper system will not record or store any information on its servers.

### **Is it confidential?**

Whilst we have made every effort for your message to be secure and confidential, there may be occasions when it could be recorded on school security or other systems. We think email is a great way to get your message to the right person who can help you, but it's important to remember that email is not always 100% secure.

Don't let this stand in your way; we think the problem you are reporting is way more important than these risks.

Whilst confidentiality is important, in really serious cases (eg someone is at risk of harm) that might mean school may share your information with the police.

In fact, if you tell us something really serious, we will try our best to make sure you get the right help and support that you need.

### **Who do my reports go to?**

When you send your report through the SWGfL Whisper system, it goes directly to a school email address that we have set up specifically.

Someone at school has the responsibility of reading the reports and then deciding on a course of action. In most cases, this will be a member of staff who has safeguarding expertise and knows how best to deal with it.

### **What can I expect to happen?**

This depends. The school has a duty of care to deal with any issues that involve the safety or well-being of students or pupils, so you can expect it to be acted upon.

If you haven't left your details but wanted to pass on information about someone or something that you are concerned about, the school will investigate the issue further using the information you have provided. This could mean talking to the people directly involved or any other possible bystanders.

If you have left your details it is assumed that you need someone to get back to you or you are happy to discuss this further. In most cases this will be a member of staff initially.

### **How long will it take?**

We advise schools using SWGfL Whisper to respond to any reports within 24 hours during school time. At weekends this may very well be longer and during school holidays when the school is closed, the service may not be available. To fully investigate issues will take longer depending on the complexity of the case.

### **Is my report stored anywhere?**

SWGfL Whisper is an anonymous system and does not store your details. Only the content of your message is sent through to a specific email address and will be stored on the school email service for staff to respond to.

It is likely the school may want to keep those emails as a way of recording the issues they have dealt with.

### **What happens if my problem can't be solved?**

Not all issues that are reported can be solved. But reporting these things have a lot of other benefits.

Very often they can raise awareness of an issue across the school and things can change because of that through discussion and education. Reporting someone who is bullying, for example, can very often focus attention on that person and is sometimes enough to change their behaviour.

Whilst your report may not get the solution you want to see, reporting bad behaviours can also stop them from happening to others. If people know their unacceptable behaviour will be reported they are less likely to do it and this can have a positive effect across the whole school.