




Whistle-Blowing Policy

Policy number	5	Person responsible	DD
Date created	Jan 26	Review date	Jan 27
Signed		Date	1/2/26

Aim

Oakwood Education are committed to upholding the highest standards of care and education. Oakwood will listen to concerns raised and will take action to address any improper practice.

We encourage all employees and contractors to report any illegal or unethical behaviour within the company without fear of reprisal. Our Whistleblowing policy is intended to cover concerns such as:

- Financial malpractice or fraud
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- Dangers to health and safety or the environment
- Criminal activity
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour

This policy should not be used to question business decisions made by Oakwood Education, or to raise any matters that are covered under other policies.

Any allegations relating to child protection will follow the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Raising a concern

Ideally the staff member should put their concerns in writing, setting out the background to the situation, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why they are concerned about the situation.

In the first instance concerns should be taken to the Directors. If, due to the nature of the concern, this is not possible consult the Local Authority Designated Officer or the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

If this person or body is unwilling or unable to act on the concern, the staff member should then raise it with:

- The Local Authority Designated Officer or the Local Safeguarding Children Board (if it concerns a child protection issue and is not already covered by the procedure set out in Oakwood Education's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy)
- Ultimately, with the police (if a crime is thought to have been committed).

If the member of staff is still uncertain about how to proceed with the concern, he or she can contact the whistle-blowing charity PCAW (Public Concern at Work) for advice.

Responding to a concern

Initial enquiries will usually involve a meeting with the individual raising the concern, and will decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. If a concern relates to issues which fall within the scope of other policies, it will be addressed under those policies.

If the initial meeting does not resolve the concern, further investigation is required. The appropriate person will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided within ten working days where feasible, or if this is not possible, giving a date by which the final response can be expected. The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and who to contact if the member of staff is unhappy with the response and wishes to take the matter further.

Rights and responsibilities of the whistle-blower

All concerns will be treated in the strictest of confidence and Oakwood will make every effort not to reveal the identity of anyone raising a concern in good faith. At the appropriate time, however, the member of staff may need to come forward as a witness.

If a member of staff raises a concern in good faith which is then not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that person. If the investigation concludes that the member of staff maliciously fabricated the allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against that person.

Contact information

Swindon:

- LADO(Local Authority Designated Officer) - 01793 463854
- LSCB(Local Safeguarding Children Board) - 01793 463803
- PCAW(Public Concern at Work) - 020 7404 6609 (website: www.pcaw.org.uk)

Wiltshire:

- LADO - 0300 456 0108 (Option 6)
- LSCB - 0300 456 0108
- PCAW(Public Concern at Work) - 020 7404 6609 (website: www.pcaw.org.uk)

Gloucestershire:

- LADO - 01452 426994
- LSCB - 01452 426565
- PCAW(Public Concern at Work) - 020 7404 6609 (website: www.pcaw.org.uk)