



Whistleblowing Policy

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to uphold the highest standards of integrity and transparency within our school by encouraging and enabling staff and other members of the school community to voice serious concerns or irregularities within the school, without fear of reprisal.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, stakeholders, and suppliers within the school.

Legal Framework

This policy is aligned with the provisions set by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. This Act protects whistleblowers who make disclosures of certain types of information to reveal misconduct, illegal acts, or failure to comply with regulatory requirements.

2. Definitions

Whistleblowing

Refers to the act of disclosing information about wrongdoing, malpractice, or dangers in the workplace that are in the public interest.

Whistleblower

An individual who exposes information or activity within the organisation deemed illegal, unethical, or incorrect.

Protected Disclosure

Information disclosed by an employee or school member that they sincerely believe shows malpractice or impropriety. It must be in the public interest and not personal grievances.

3. Principles

Confidentiality

Whistleblower identities will be kept confidential unless revealed by the individual's own action or as required by law during a formal investigation.

Protection

Protection from retaliation or harassment is guaranteed for whistleblowers, as long as the disclosure is made in good faith and whilst following prescribed reporting lines.

Anonymous Allegations

Anonymous reports will be considered but are more difficult to act upon; providing identity helps to facilitate the investigation process.

4. Procedures

Raising a Concern Internally

Contact Points

Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher, or another nominated officer will be available to discuss concerns confidentially.

Steps to Report

The individual should write a report detailing the specific concern, including dates, times, and witnesses if applicable. This report should be submitted to one of the designated contact points.

External Reporting Channels

Regulatory Bodies

If internal channels are unavailable or the whistleblower believes it not safe or appropriate, disclosures can be directed to external bodies such as Ofsted, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), or local authorities.

Legal Advice

Whistleblowers are encouraged to seek independent legal advice if unsure about the appropriateness or process of making a disclosure.

5. Responding to Whistleblowing

Investigation Process

Initial Assessment

Upon receiving a report, an initial assessment will determine if an investigation is warranted based on the provided evidence and the nature of the issue reported.

Conducting the Investigation

An impartial investigation will be conducted promptly by suitably trained personnel. The process will be thorough, confidential, and aimed at ensuring fairness for all parties involved.

Feedback to Whistleblower

Timely feedback will be provided to the whistleblower regarding the progress and outcome of the investigation while considering confidentiality obligations.

6. Training and Awareness

Induction and Continuous Learning

All staff will receive training on this whistleblowing policy as part of their induction. Refresher training will also be provided at regular intervals.

Resources and Support

Support measures, including counselling or mediation, will be made available to individuals involved in a whistleblowing case.

7. Monitoring and Review

Annual Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness, relevance, and compliance with legislation.

Record Keeping

All records related to whistleblowing will be securely maintained for an adequate period, respecting both confidentiality and data protection laws.

8. Policy Distribution

Accessibility

This policy will be accessible to all staff members and school stakeholders through the school's website, staff handbook, and paper copies upon request.

Communication

Clear communication mechanisms will be established to ensure all staff are fully informed about the whistleblowing policy and procedures.

9. Reference Documents

Relevant Legislation

Including the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

DfE and Ofsted Guidance

Specific documents related to whistleblowing in educational settings, provided by the Department for Education and Ofsted, will be referenced and adhered to.