



## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

### **1. ABOUT THIS POLICY**

- 1.1 The School is committed to the highest standards of honesty, integrity and accountability in carrying out its functions. All staff are expected to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.
- 1.2 This policy covers all employees, including apprentices & interns, officers, consultants, contractors, casual workers, volunteers and agency workers and explains the protection and support that is available for 'whistleblowers'.
- 1.3 Any prospective 'whistleblower' can seek support from their Trade Union either before raising a concern or at any time during a concern being considered under this policy.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

### **2. WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING?**

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to any activities that the School is engaged in. It covers the following specific wrongdoing/practices:

- A criminal offence or activity.
- Breach of any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements
- A miscarriage of justice.
- Danger to the health and safety of any individual.
- Harm or risk of harm to children
- Damage to the environment.
- Bribery
- Facilitation of tax evasion
- Financial fraud or mismanagement
- Criminal activity
- Negligence
- A breach of internal policies & procedures
- Conduct likely to damage our reputation
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- Public examination fraud
- The deliberate concealment of information about any of the above.

A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to these matters. Any such concerns should be reported under this policy. Whistleblowing is for disclosures that are in the public interest, it is not to be used for raising complaints relating to their own personal circumstances or treatment at work. In those cases, employees should use the grievance procedure or other appropriate Human Resources procedure.

### **3. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN**

- 3.1 A Whistleblowing concern should be raised with your line manager or if this is not possible, your line manager's manager. If there are specific reasons why

you are unable to report your concerns within your own line management chain, you may make a referral straight to the Headteacher or, if the concern is about the Headteacher, to the Chair of Governors. You must advise the person you report to that you are making a disclosure under the Schools Whistleblowing policy. A record of all whistleblowing concerns is maintained by the School

- 3.2 The person receiving your referral will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a companion (work colleague or union representative) to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation. The concern will then be investigated under this policy.

#### **4. CONFIDENTIALITY**

We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are often very difficult to investigate but they will be considered at the discretion of the School. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern & the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation from attributable sources. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern or if required for legal reasons. This will be discussed with you before your name is disclosed.

#### **5. EXTERNAL DISCLOSURES**

- 5.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.
- 5.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external.

#### **6. PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS**

- 6.1 The School aims to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 6.2 Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Headteacher or Chair of Governors
- 6.3 You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct, you may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 6.4 If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken against you. However, if you make a false allegation maliciously, disciplinary action may be taken against you.
- 6.5 "Protect" operates a confidential helpline providing support and advice. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.
- 6.6 It is recognised that raising concerns can be difficult & stressful for the individual. Advice & support will be made available as appropriate to both the employee raising the concern & any employee subject to an investigation under this policy.

#### **7. A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT CONCERNS**

- 7.1 There is a responsibility for all to notify and report any issues of serious concern. Failure to do so may have a negative impact on the delivery of school services, negatively impact on the school's reputation or impact on the conduct of an individual. As a result, failure to declare or report such concern could be considered a disciplinary matter.

#### **8. CONTACTS**

<b>Protect</b>	Helpline: (020) 7404 6609 E-mail: <a href="mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk">whistle@protect-advice.org.uk</a>
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(Independent whistleblowing charity, formerly “public concern at work”)	Website: <a href="http://www.protect-advice.org.uk">www.protect-advice.org.uk</a>
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