

Hulme Hall Grammar School



Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Control	
Report	Whistleblowing Policy
Approval Body	Governing Body
Date Reviewed	September 2018
Next Review Date	September 2020

Introduction

The School is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity, and expects all staff to maintain high standards in accordance with their contractual obligations and the School's policies and procedures.

However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur.

This procedure is not a substitute for normal line management processes but an addition to them. Staff should always first consider using normal line management for raising concerns. This procedure is only for the purpose of raising concerns about wrongdoing and is not a substitute or alternative for existing procedures such as the Grievance, Disciplinary Procedures for staff or the complaints procedure.

This procedure should only be used where all other existing internal procedures are felt to be inappropriate or when a member of staff, for whatever reason, feels inhibited in going through the normal line management. As an example, therefore, if a member of staff has a personal grievance then it must be raised through the grievance procedure; it would not be appropriate for it to be raised through this procedure. The existence of this procedure does not prevent staff from raising concerns through their trade union if they so wish. The procedure is therefore not a route through which employees can raise concerns about mismanagement which may arise from weak management rather than malpractice.

Aims of Policy

- To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected
- To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns
- To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be a mistaken.
- To ensure the school has a culture of safety and of raising concerns.
- To value staff and reflect on their practice.

This policy takes account of the Whistleblowing Arrangements Code of Practice issued by the British Standards Institute and Public Concern at Work.

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and is not intended to have contractual effect. It is provided for guidance to all members of staff at the School and the School reserves the right to amend its content at any time.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- criminal activity
- miscarriages of justice
- danger to health and safety
- damage to the environment
- failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements
- financial fraud or mismanagement
- negligence
- breach of the school's internal policies and procedures including its Code of Conduct
- conduct likely to damage the School's reputation
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

A 'whistleblower' is a person who raises a genuine concern in good faith relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of the School's activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy.

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to Staff's own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases you should follow the Grievance Policy and Procedure.

If Staff are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy they should seek advice from the Headmaster and if the matter is in relation to an alleged wrongdoing by the Headmaster or Headmaster then Staff should seek the advice of the Designated Governor.

Procedures for reporting and handling concerns are below. This includes poor or unsafe practice and potential failure in the school's safeguarding regime, provision for mediation and dispute resolution can be carried out where necessary.

Training and support will be provided for the staff. Any concerns will be transparent and accountable in relation to how concerns are received and handled.

Raising a Whistleblowing Concern

Procedure Stage 1:

In the event of detecting wrongdoing, the disclosure should first be made to the relevant Line Manager, such as the Head of Department, Key Stage manager or Assistant Head. If the wrongdoing relates to a safeguarding issue please follow the Safeguarding Procedures. In the event of the Line Manager being the one suspected of wrongdoing, the employee disclosing the information is entitled to proceed directly to Stage 2.

A response from the Line Manager to the employee making the disclosure should be given within seven days.

Stage 2: If no response to the disclosure is forthcoming after seven days, or if the Line Manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, the employee is entitled to inform the Head teacher.

If the issue involves the Head, the Chairman of Governors should be informed.

A response from the Head or Chair of Governors to the employee making the disclosure should be given within 7 days.

Whistle blowing procedures will be dealt with as part of the Staff Code of Conduct/ Behaviour Policy.

Concerns against Governors

If a concern against a Governor is received then this will be treated in the same way as any other concern. It will receive the same serious consideration. The concern will be raised by the Headmaster with the Chairman of Governors who will decide how it should be dealt with.

If the concern is against the Chairman of Governors then clearly this process cannot be followed. In such circumstances, the concern will be taken directly to the Headmaster who will decide in consultation with the Governor responsible for Whistleblowing. In normal circumstances such a concern would be referred to the Department for Education for action.

If you are in any doubt you can seek advice from Public Concern at Work, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are:

Public Concern at Work (Independent whistle blowing charity)

Helpline: 020 7404 6609

E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk

Website: www.pcaw.co.uk

Public Concern at Work (Independent whistle blowing charity)

Staff must not threaten or retaliate against 'whistleblower's in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

All Staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Comments, suggestions and queries should be addressed to the Headmaster in the first instance.



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