



WHISTLEBLOWING

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is when a worker report certain types of wrongdoing or misconduct within an organisation. The wrongdoing disclosed must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others, e.g. pupils, general public.

The wrongdoing must relate to or show one of the following:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation
- a possible miscarriage of justice
- a Health & Safety risk
- damaging the environment
- misuse of public money
- corruption or unethical conduct
- abuse of pupils, students or other users
- deliberate concealment of any of these matters
- any other substantial and relevant concern.

The concern could be about something that happened in the past, is currently happening or likely to happen in the future.

Concerns or complaints that employees wish to raise formally, about their own employment, should normally be raised using the school's Grievance Procedure, unless the employee believes the concern is in the public interest. This includes for example, concerns related to working conditions, working relations, employment rights or bullying or harassment.

Whistleblowers will not be treated unfairly or lose their jobs because they 'blow the whistle'.

Whistleblowers must hold a reasonable belief that the concern they are raising is in the public interest. The school's governing body will provide all reasonable protection for those who raise concerns made in the public interest.

The school's governing body will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate personal support is offered both to a worker raising a concern and to any worker against whom allegations have been made under this procedure.

Although an employee has certain legal obligations of confidentiality to the school, in a limited set of circumstances, whistleblowing may override these obligations. This guidance sets out the circumstances under which these disclosures may lawfully be made.

Procedure for raising a whistleblowing concern

Concerns can be raised anonymously, but the school or person receiving the allegation may not be able to take it further if they haven't been provided with all the information they need.

Whistleblowers can give their name but request confidentiality and, in these circumstances, every effort will be made to protect their identity.

All disclosures made under this procedure will be treated sensitively, consistently and fairly.



Step 1- Deciding who to report the concern to

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing.

You can raise your concern with your line manager. Alternatively, you can raise the matter with the Principal or the Chair of Governors.

Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of your concerns, you will need to demonstrate that you have sufficient evidence or other reasonable grounds to raise them.

You can be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague to any meetings that are required.

Step 2

The person with whom you have raised your concern, will decide what action is needed. They may ask you to provide further information. They will write to you within 10 days to let you know how your concern will be dealt with.

The information you can expect to receive is:

- an indication of how the concern will be dealt with
- an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- whether any initial enquiries have been made
- whether further investigations will take place, and if not why not
- information about support available for you.

The person with whom you have raised your concern will at the same time notify the schools' Chair of the Board that a whistleblowing allegation has been made.

Step 3

Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate.

An investigation may be carried out, depending on the nature of the allegations and the evidence/information presented. Full details of the investigation may be withheld from you to protect the confidentiality of other people.

Information will need to be passed on to those with a legitimate need to have this information and it may be necessary for you to provide a written statement and act as a witness in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings or enquiry. This will be discussed with you first.

Where an investigation is necessary, it may take the form of one or more of the following:

- an internal investigation by the Principal or a governor, which may, for example, take the form of a disciplinary investigation
- a referral to the Police
- the setting up of an external independent inquiry.

Step 4

You will be informed of the outcome of any investigation, in writing, and/or of any action taken, subject to the constraints of confidentiality and the law.

If there is an issue of an exceptionally serious nature which you believe to be substantially true, then you may disclose the issue to someone other than those listed.