



Whistleblowing Policy

Policy written by:	Philippa Mills	July 2019
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Whistleblowing policy

1 **Honesty and integrity:** The College is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards in accordance with the Code of Conduct. 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 and to address them when they do occur.

2 **Aims:** The aims of this policy are to:

2.1 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;

2.2 provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns; and

2.3 reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

3 **Staff:**

This policy covers all employees, officers, governors, consultants, contractors, volunteers, work placement students, casual workers and agency workers.

Wrongdoing at work

4 **Whistleblowing:**

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

4.1 criminal activity;

4.2 safeguarding concerns (see paragraph 9 below);

4.3 failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;

4.4 miscarriages of justice;

4.5 danger to health and safety;

4.6 damage to the environment;

4.7 bribery;

4.8 financial fraud or mismanagement;

4.9 other unlawful or unethical conduct in the workplace;

4.10 the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

5 **Whistleblower:**

A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If staff have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities and such disclosure is in the public interest (a **whistleblowing concern**) they should report it under this policy.

- 6 **Grievances:** This procedure should not be used where staff have a complaint relating to their personal circumstances in the workplace. The grievance procedure contained in the Employment Manual should be used in such cases.
- 7 **Detriment:** Provided that this procedure is used appropriately and correctly, staff will not suffer any detriment as a result of reporting a suspected wrongdoing.
- 8 **Advice:** If a member of staff is uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy advice should be sought from the Principal and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead, Protect, the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline or the Modern Slavery helpline.

Safeguarding

- 9 **Safeguarding:** Nothing within this policy is intended to prevent staff from complying with their statutory obligations in accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, September 2019). In particular:
- 9.1 **Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy:** If a member of staff has any concern about a student's welfare, action should be taken immediately. The concern should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. See the College's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures for full information about what to do if a member of staff has a concern about a student, including what to do if the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available.
- 9.2 **Safeguarding - member of staff:** Concerns about another staff member should be raised with the Principal, or if the concern is about the Principal, with the Chair of Governors (without first notifying the Principal) in accordance with the procedures in the College's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- 9.3 **Whistleblowing policy:** This procedure should be followed to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices at the College or potential failures by the College or staff to properly fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities.
- 10 **The Modern Slavery helpline:** The College is committed to the prevention of Modern Slavery. Queries relating to Modern Slavery please should be addressed to the Principal. Identified instances of modern slavery should be immediately notified to the police. If a member of staff thinks that they have identified an instance of modern slavery, or if a member of staff considers that he/she may be a victim of modern slavery he/she should contact the Modern Slavery helpline on 0800 0121 700.
- 11 **Exit interviews:** All staff are trained so that they understand they are expected and encouraged to raise concerns they have, whether related to the safeguarding and welfare of students, the conduct of staff or other matters, during the course of their employment in accordance with this policy. Safeguarding children is at the centre of the College's culture and concerns should always be raised in accordance with paragraph 9 above. If issues have not been identified before, safeguarding will always be considered formally during staff performance development reviews and appraisal and finally at exit interviews which are held with all leavers. Staff who raise concerns about working practices at the College to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or an appropriate senior member of Staff will be protected from detriment under this policy.

Confidentiality

- 12 **Confidentiality:** We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if a member of staff wants to raise a concern confidentially, the College will make every effort to keep the member of staff's identity secret. If it is

necessary for anyone investigating the concern to know the member of staff's identity, this will be discussed in advance.

- 13 **Anonymous disclosures:** The College does not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if it is not possible to obtain further information. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible.

Stage one

- 14 **Procedure:** The member of staff should disclose the suspected wrongdoing first to their Line Manager. In the event that the Line Manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, Stage Two of this procedure should be implemented.
- 15 **Response:** The member of staff can expect a response detailing to whom the disclosure has been notified or any action taken within seven days of the Line Manager becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage two

- 16 **Procedure:** If no response is forthcoming after seven days from the Line Manager, if the member of staff is not satisfied with the way in which the concern has been handled or if the Line Manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, the Principal should be notified.
- 17 **Response:** A response detailing any action taken may be expected, within seven days of the Principal becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage three

- 18 **Procedure:** If no such response is forthcoming after seven days from the Principal, if the member of staff is not satisfied with the way in which the concern has been handled or if the Principal is involved in the suspected wrongdoing the Chair of Governors should be informed of the disclosure.

Relevant external reporting

- 19 **Outside body:** The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. The law recognises, as does paragraph 9 above, that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for a member of staff to report their concerns to a relevant outside body including:
- 19.1 the local authority's Designated Officer;
 - 19.2 Children's Social Care;
 - 19.3 the NSPCC;
 - 19.4 the Health and Safety Executive;
 - 19.5 the Environment Agency;
 - 19.6 the Information Commissioner;
 - 19.7 the Department for Education;
 - 19.8 the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy;
 - 19.9 the police;

- 19.10 the Charity Commission;
 - 19.11 The Boarding Schools Association;
 - 19.12 the Independent Schools Inspectorate;
 - 19.13 the Channel Police Practitioner.
- 20 **Advice:** Staff are strongly encouraged to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. In most cases it should not be necessary to alert anyone external but before this is done, as well as considering the internal help and support available which is identified above, external advice may be sought from:
- 20.1 **Protect:** If a member of staff has any concerns about disclosing a suspected wrongdoing the independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, operates a confidential helpline. Staff can call 020 7404 6609 for advice.
 - 20.2 **NSPCC:** The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8.00 am to 8.00 pm Monday to Friday) or e mail www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/our-services/nspcc-helpline
 - 20.3 **The Modern Slavery helpline:** The Modern Slavery helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns about modern slavery internally. Staff can call on 0800 0121 700.
- 21 **The media:** Staff should under no circumstances approach a commercial body or the media with details of the suspected wrongdoing. If a member of staff approaches any such body and/or where a concern is disclosed in a malicious manner or for personal gain, the protection given by this procedure may be lost. Additionally, the College may consider this to be gross misconduct and disciplinary action may be taken.
- 22 **Queries:** Queries about this procedure should be addressed to the Principal.