

Whistleblowing Policy



1. Purpose of this policy

1.1 We are committed to carrying out our responsibilities with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent any malpractice and unethical conduct occurring and to address them when they do occur.

1.2 The aims of this policy are:

- 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 without fear of harassment, victimization and any other reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- That all employees and support staff have the ability to speak up that any issues or concerns can be dealt with effectively in the interests of the School, employees and students.

1.3 This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers.

2. People responsible for the policy

2.1 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.

2.2 The HR Manager has day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy, and must ensure that all managers and other staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive regular and appropriate training.

2.3 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 HR Manager.

3. What is whistleblowing?

3.1 Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which must be in the public interest, and relates to suspected wrongdoing, illegal activity or dangers at work of a fellow employee, employer, or third party. You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near future. This may include:

- criminal activity;
- failure to comply with any legal or professional obligations or regulatory requirements;
- miscarriages of justice;
- danger to health and safety;
- damage to the environment;
- bribery;
- facilitating tax evasion;
- financial fraud or mismanagement;
- breach of our internal policies and procedures including, but not limited to, our Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure;
- conduct likely to damage our reputation and/or bring us into disrepute
- conduct likely to damage our financial wellbeing;
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- negligence;
- malpractice;
- deliberate concealment of wrongdoing and/or related to any of the above matters.

3.2 A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above, and whether what they have raised has happened, is happening or is likely to happen. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy.

- 3.3 This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases you should read our Grievance Policy or Respect Policy as appropriate. Whistleblowing regards concerns or issues which do not directly or personally affect them
- 3.4 If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from one of the list of contacts specified at the end of this policy.

4. Raising a whistleblowing concern

- 4.1 We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager or the Headteacher. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your line manager or Headteacher has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact one of the following:
- The HR Manager
 - Our confidential external telephone hotline
 - The Chair of the Governing Body.
- 4.2 Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.
- 4.3 An independent manager will acknowledge receipt of your whistleblowing complaint and arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern, usually within 10 working days. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.
- 4.4 We will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to protect your identity. If it is necessary for

anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

- 5.2 We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to one of the contact points listed at the end of this policy and appropriate measures may then be taken to preserve confidentiality.

6. Untrue and unfounded allegations

- 6.1 If an employee makes an allegation where he/she has a genuine concern, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that employee. If, however, we conclude that an employee has made malicious or vexatious allegations, or with a view to personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against that employee.
- 6.2 Following investigation, allegations may be confirmed as unfounded. This outcome will be notified to the employee who raised the concern, who will be informed that the Governing Body deems the matter to be concluded and that it should not be raised again unless new evidence becomes available.

7. Investigation and outcome

- 7.1 Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.
- 7.2 In some cases we may appoint an independent investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing, including moving from this procedure to the Disciplinary Policy.
- 7.3 We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

7.4 If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

8. If you are not satisfied

8.1 While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy you can help us to achieve this. We expect all staff to continue working and acting professionally in line with our policies and code of conduct during and after the process, regardless of the outcome.

8.2 If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with one of the other key contacts in paragraph 4.

9. External disclosures

9.1 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.

9.2 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. It will very rarely if ever be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

9.3 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a supplier or service provider. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally first. You should contact your line manager or one of the other individuals set out in paragraph 4 for guidance.

10. Protection and support for whistleblowers

10.1 It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. Protection for whistle-blowers is lawful when the employee reasonable believes (i) that they are acting in the best interest of the public and (ii) that they reasonably believe that the disclosure tends to show past, present or likely future wrongdoing falling into one or more of the categories listed in paragraph 3.1.

11. Contacts

HR Manager	humanresources@haydonschool.org.uk
Chair of the Governing Body	Tanya Huehns Thuehns.312@lgflmail.org
Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: 0203 117 2520 E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk