



Whistleblowing Policy

Culford School has adopted a policy and procedures for whistleblowing for reporting malpractice and also child protection concerns, to provide clear guidance for all employees and volunteers on when it is necessary to raise concerns and how to do so.

Its aim is to support the schools culture of being open, transparent and providing a safe environment where all employees and volunteers feel able to speak up. The Public Disclosure Act 1998 prevents you from suffering a detriment or having your contract terminated for whistleblowing and we take seriously any concerns which you may raise under this legislation and encourage you to follow these procedures.

Malpractice covered by this 'public interest disclosure' includes fraud, health and safety, environmental damage, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice and failures to comply with legal obligations, inappropriate behaviour, covering up malpractice and unethical conduct.

This procedure is separate from the School's procedures regarding grievances. Employees should not use the whistleblowing procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation. This procedure is to enable all employees to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the school.

We encourage you to use the procedure if you are concerned about any malpractice at work. Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. However if the procedure has not been invoked in good faith then it will make you liable to immediate termination of employment or such lesser disciplinary sanction as may be appropriate in the circumstances. Anyone who makes threats against a whistleblower in any way, will be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees and volunteers who wish to raise a concern under this procedure for malpractice are entitled to have the matter treated confidentially by the school. The complainant's name will not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator of malpractice without the complainant's prior approval, as far as possible. It may be appropriate in the interests of confidentiality that concerns are raised orally rather than in writing, although all employees and volunteers are encouraged to express their concern in writing wherever possible. If there is evidence of criminal activity then the Police will in all cases be informed.

When does the whistleblowing policy apply?

In consideration of MIST's Whistleblowing Policy, this policy may apply in the following circumstances;

Malpractice

- Manipulation of accounting records and finances
- Inappropriate use of the schools assets or funds (including MIST assets or funds)

- Decision making for personal gain
- Criminal activity
- Abuse of position
- Fraud and deceit
- Serious breaches of procedure which may advantage a particular party or actions likely to bring the reputation of the School, MIST or the Methodist Church into question
- Someone's health and safety is in danger
- Risk or actual damage to the environment

Child Protection

- Serious breaches of Safeguarding Policy and procedures
- Poor or unsafe practice in relation to the handling or recording of safeguarding concerns

This list is not exhaustive and should an employee or volunteer be uncertain whether this policy is applicable, they should seek advice from the Headmaster. If the matter is related to concerns about the Headmaster then advice should be sought from the Chair of Governors. If there is alleged wrong doing in relation to a member of the School's Governing Body the staff member can contact MIST General Secretary.

How to Whistleblow

In all non-safeguarding matters employees and volunteers should decide who is the most appropriate person to deal with their concern;

- Line Manager
- Member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Headmaster
- Chair of Governor
- MIST General Secretary

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where an employee or volunteer may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the employee reasonably believes:

- That exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- That the school would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- Where they believe they would be victimised by the school;
- Where the Secretary of State has ordered it.

Child Protection and Whistleblowing

Any employee or volunteer, who has a concern about a child, should follow the School Safeguarding Policy.

[Child Protection \(Safeguarding\) 2020-2021](#)

If you feel a child is not being made safe, that child protection arrangements within the school are



inadequate, concerns about the School's practices or if the behaviour of colleagues or others which may put a child at risk of abuse or serious harm should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) as action may already have been taken and/or the designated staff may have sought confidential advice from partner agencies such as children's social care or the police. If the individual is not satisfied with the outcome of this discussion, they should report their concerns to the Headmaster or one of the other designated staff.

If the individual still has concerns about the safety or welfare of the child, they should contact at least one of the following:

- The Governor with responsibility for safeguarding trishaabbott@hotmail.com **01359 253665**
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- LADOCentral@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk **0300 123244**
- Children's social care / MASH **0345 6061499**
- MIST independent safeguarding consultant – Carolyn Eyre – carolyn.eyre@btinternet.com

In the case of possible serious harm, the police should be informed. Anybody can make a referral directly to **Children's Services to Customer First 0808 800 4005**.

Concerns about a colleague / adult in school

This relates to concerns that a member of staff, volunteer or other adult in school may have harmed a child/ren or behaved in a way that suggests they may be unsuitable to work with children. Anyone who has concerns about the behaviour of another adult in school should report this to the Headmaster in the first instance, unless the concern relates to the Headmaster.

If the allegation or concern relates to the Headmaster - or there is reason to believe that s/he not taking the appropriate action / the individual does not believe their concerns are being taken seriously - they should contact at least one of the following:

- The Governor with responsibility for safeguarding
- Patricia Abbott trishaabbott@hotmail.com **01359 253665**
- The Chair of Governors - Steve Abbott C/o Rosie.Penkethman@culford.co.uk
- MIST General Secretary – David Humphreys gensec@methodistschools.org.uk **07748 808060**
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) LADOCentral@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk **0300 1232044**
- The Police, if the incident or concern is so serious as to warrant a police investigation or a child has been placed at immediate risk of harm.

If staff feel unable to raise the issue with the School or MIST and/ or feel their genuine concerns are not being addressed; they can contact an external support organisation such as **NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (Tel: 0800 028 0285 or email help@nscpp.org.uk)**

How is whistleblowing managed?

Any concern raised will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and appropriate corrective action will be pursued. The employee or volunteers making the allegation will be kept informed of progress and, whenever possible and subject to third party rights, will be informed of the resolution.



In case of any doubt staff, the Headmaster or Governors can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who can offer a confidential helpline.

If an employee or volunteer has been dismissed or removed as a result of a referral the school will inform the DBS.

If a teacher has been guilty of professional misconduct then the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) will be made aware. In EYFS any allegations will be reported to Ofsted as soon as possible and within 14 days.

Important Contacts

LADO - **0300 1232044** LADOCentral@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk

General Secretary of MIST (**020 7935 3723**) gensec@methodist.org.uk

MIST Safeguarding Trustee beaston@methodistschool.org.uk

MIST Independent Safeguarding Consultant carolyn.eyre@btinternet.com

School Chair of Governors, Steven Abbott - C/o Rosie.Penkethman@culford.co.uk

School Safeguarding Governor, Patricia Abbott - C/o Rosie.Penkethman@culford.co.uk

Protect Advice Line - **020 3117 2520** <https://protect-advice.org.uk/contact-protect-advice-line/>

Useful links

[MIST Whistleblowing \(Confidential reporting\) Policy 2020](#)

[Child Protection \(Safeguarding\) Policy 2020-2021](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1988](#)

[Protect](#)

[Whistleblowing for employees - GOV.UK](#)