



WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Introduction

All organisations face the risk of things going wrong or of unknowingly harbouring malpractice. As a school we positively encourage staff and members of the school community to raise worries or concerns. With this in mind it is important that all members of the community are aware that at Stonar:

- all instances of malpractice (moral, ethical and financial) will be taken seriously.
- confidentiality is to be respected for those members of the school community who raise concerns and that it is possible to raise these concerns outside the line management structure or normal lines of communication for pupils.
- sanctions may exist for those making false and malicious allegations. This will follow the procedures outlined in Stonar's disciplinary procedures.

any concerns about malpractice should normally be raised to the person's line manager, a member of Senior Management or a pupil's normal line of communication. It will subsequently be followed up.

What is a Whistle Blower?

The term is used to describe someone who becomes aware of a serious problem and then raises this matter so that it can be investigated and corrected. The sorts of problems covered could include:

Financial fraud or malpractice
Other types of corruption
Attempts to cover up earlier problems
Abuse or neglect of vulnerable people
Failure to deliver proper standards of teaching or service
Damaging conflicts at a senior level
Bullying, harassment or victimisation in the school at any level

Why have a Policy?

An effective whistle blowing policy will ensure that concerns are properly raised and expressed in the school. This will then encourage:

1. A culture of openness and accountability
2. Reassure staff and pupils that they will not be victimised for expressing their concerns

3. Deter fraud and malpractice
4. Help staff to play their part in the school and feel valued
5. Identify and help to resolve damaging personal conflicts
6. Avoid public criticism and the need to manage a crisis

Confidential Reporting

- 1) Stonar believes firmly that all in the school should be able to follow their sense of right and wrong. We believe that through consultation we will continue to develop confidential reporting procedures and practices. .
- 2) As a school we are aware that the following are not acceptable and they have an impact on the school, its pupils and employees:
 - Fraud, corruption and malpractice
 - Abuse and neglect of vulnerable people
 - Failure to deliver proper standards of service
 - Damaging personal conflicts at senior level
 - Bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation in the school.
- 3) The staff handbook makes clear what is expected of staff and the school rules makes clear what is expected of pupils. Anything that is unclear should be discussed with line managers for staff and follow normal lines of communication for pupils.
- 4) If a concern is raised, it will always be dealt with seriously.
- 5) If it is preferred, a concern can be raised through a colleague or friend.
- 6) The school will support employees and pupils who report a concern and will protect them from reprisals or victimisation. Such reporting will not affect a staff member's career or enjoyment of the job or the pupil's enjoyment of school life.
- 7) The school will do everything that it can to respect confidentiality although both staff and pupils have to be made aware that, under certain conditions, confidentiality cannot be kept, but the school will ensure that only relevant people are informed.
- 8) If attempts are made to discourage, victimise or criticise either pupils or staff concerned from raising concerns, the school will treat this as a disciplinary offence.

Who to Contact

- In the vast majority of cases the correct procedure for raising concerns is through the line manager for staff and through the normal lines of communication for pupils. However, in particular circumstances, employees should speak to the Head, Bursar or other member of the school Leadership Team asking them for a confidential meeting.

- In any case involving child protection issues, it is vital that the procedure laid down in the Safeguarding Policy is followed and advice is sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school.
- There may be exceptional cases when it is best to contact the Chair of the Board of Directors. To do this the concern should be written down and sealed in an envelope addressed to the Director(s) care of the Bursar. These instances might include:
 - (a) If the problem involves a very senior member of staff
 - (b) If a criminal offence has occurred, the Police.

Dealing with Concerns

Anyone raising concerns needs to be aware that such issues will need to be fully investigated by the school. The school needs to treat with absolute fairness both the person raising the concern and also any others who might be involved.

Should they request it, anyone raising a concern will be informed of the results of any investigation which has taken place and of any proposed action which might result, except in the case of child protection issues.

No one reporting a concern in good faith has anything to fear, however abuse of this reporting system by maliciously raising unfounded allegations will result in very serious action being taken.

This procedure is separate from the school's procedures regarding grievances and employees should not use the whistleblowing procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation.

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Signed:  Director

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