



ALDRO

Whistleblowing Policy

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1. Whistleblowing

The School has adopted this policy and the accompanying procedure on whistleblowing to enable members of staff to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about child protection, fraud, bribery, malpractice, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice, a failure to comply with legal obligations, inappropriate behaviour or unethical conduct. The policy also provides, if necessary, for such concerns to be raised outside the organisation.

If staff wish confidential, external advice around any aspect of Whistleblowing, they may contact **PUBLIC CONCERN AT WORK**. This is a whistleblowing charity offering free confidential legal advice to employees, helping individuals decide if and how to take a concern forward.

Advice line telephone: 020 7404 6609

Email: whistle@pcaw.co.uk

Website: www.pcaw.org.uk

2. About this Policy

The School is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity, and expects all staff to maintain high standards. However, 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.

In accordance with Lord Nolan's Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life the School's policy on whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that the School:

- Will not tolerate malpractice;
- Respects the confidentiality of staff raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively;
- Will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate;
- Will invoke the School's disciplinary procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations;
- Will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all members of staff.

3. Procedure

This procedure is separate from the School's adopted procedures regarding grievances. Individuals should not use the whistleblowing procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation. If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this procedure you should seek advice from the Head or the Bursar.

This procedure is to enable members of staff to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the School including any concerns, no matter how remote or apparently unsubstantiated, related to child protection issues.

Malpractice is not easily defined; however, it includes allegations of fraud, financial irregularities, corruption, bribery, dishonesty, acting contrary to the staff code of ethics, criminal activities, or failing to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice, or creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment.

A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to suspected malpractice within the School. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected malpractice affecting any of the School's activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this procedure.

4. Confidentiality

Individuals who wish to raise a concern under this procedure are entitled to have the matter treated confidentially and their name will not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator of malpractice without their prior approval. It may be appropriate to preserve confidentiality that concerns are raised orally rather than in writing, although members of staff 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.

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 discuss this with the Head or Bursar and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality.

5. Raising a whistleblowing concern

You are at liberty to raise a whistleblowing concern to the Head or Deputy or the Bursar. If the Deputy Head or the Bursar are the subject of the concern, then the member of staff should go to the Headmaster.

A meeting will be arranged with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this procedure. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information as the concerns raised are investigated.

Any concern raised will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and appropriate corrective action will be pursued. There will be provision for mediation and dispute resolution where necessary. The member of staff making the allegation will be kept informed of progress and, whenever possible and subject to third party rights, informed of the resolution. 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.

A member of staff who is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with will have a right to raise it in confidence with the Headmaster and thereafter, if the matter is not resolved with the Chairman of Governors.

Whistleblowing and Child Protection

If a member of staff is concerned that the school is putting a child at risk they should raise the concern through the Headmaster. Staff may also contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline in 0800 028 0285 or via email help@nspcc.org.uk

If the nature of the allegation is in relation to child protection concerns then the member of staff must report it to the Headmaster, or to the LADO (the Local Authority Designated Officer). If the concern is in relation to the Headmaster then the member of staff should report those concerns directly to the Chair of Governors or to the LADO. Any concerns about the Chair of Governors should be raised with the LADO

See the Aldro Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for more details.

6. External Procedures

Where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff shall have a right of access to an external person/body. This may include (depending on the subject matter of the disclosure) HMRC, the Audit

Commission, the Health and Safety Executive and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (where the disclosure relates to a child protection issue).

It should be noted that under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where a member of staff may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the individual 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.

7. Malicious Accusations

False, malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

8. Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation

No member of staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine and legitimate concern, providing that they do so in good faith and following the Whistleblowing procedures.