

ABBOTSHOLME

AN EDUCATION FOR LIFE

Whistleblowing policy

We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to do the same, maintaining high standards in this regard. We encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels of the organisation.

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks concerns, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis, without fear of recrimination.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters to the attention of senior management. This procedure encourages staff to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within school, rather than overlooking a problem.

It is recognised that whistleblowing may engender feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or that staff may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in behaviour that is causing concern, going unchecked and continuing.

Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right.... When should it be used?

This procedure is separate from the school complaints and grievances procedures and other statutory reporting procedures. Child protection issues should be reported directly to a member of the safeguarding team, following guidelines in that policy.

What should be reported

- Something that falls below expected professional standards of practice and behaviours that amount to improper conduct or makes someone feel uncomfortable.
- Conduct which is likely to be an offence or breach of law.
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation, for example, possible fraud and corruption, verbal, sexual or physical abuse, or other unethical conduct, discrimination of any kind and waste/frivolous expenditure.
- Disclosures related to past, current or likely miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees.
- Damage to the environment.
- Private interests that override the interests of the organization.

INDEPENDENT BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 2 – 18

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How to raise a concern

We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your manager. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your line manager for any reason, you should contact the Headmaster, if this is not appropriate another member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

Confidentiality

We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will take every step possible, in an effort to keep your identity confidential.

External disclosures

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.

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. We would still ask that you report your concerns to the Headmistress, Deputy Head or Bursar as well.

We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Protect (protect-advice.org.uk) operates a confidential helpline and is a good source of information for those wanting more information on whistleblowing.

Protection and support for whistle-blowers

We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy. Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment (such as victimisation or discrimination) as a result of raising a genuine concern and the organisation will not tolerate such behaviour. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform your manager immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our grievance procedure.

Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistle-blowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct, you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases, the whistle-blower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

If we conclude that a whistle-blower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistle-blower may be subject to disciplinary action.