



Whistleblowing Policy

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1. Introduction

Stonar School is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity and accountability. We recognise that from time to time things may go wrong or that malpractice, wrongdoing or poor practice may occur. The School therefore encourages all members of the School community to raise concerns where they genuinely believe that wrongdoing has occurred or is likely to occur.

This policy aims to:

- (i) Encourage individuals to report concerns without fear of reprisal
- (ii) Provide clear procedures for raising and handling concerns
- (iii) Ensure concerns are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner
- (iv) Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- (i) All employees (permanent, temporary and agency staff)
- (ii) Volunteers and contractors
- (iii) Governors and members of the Advisory Board

It does not apply to pupils, who should raise concerns using the School's safeguarding or pastoral systems, although pupils will always be listened to and protected if they disclose concerns about wrongdoing.

This policy is separate from the School's Grievance Procedure, which should be used to raise personal employment matters.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), which provides legal protection for workers who disclose certain types of information in the public interest. Under this legislation, staff who raise genuine concerns in good faith will be protected from dismissal or any form of detriment.

4. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or malpractice in the public interest. This may include, but is not limited to:

- (i) Financial fraud, theft or corruption
- (ii) Failure to comply with legal or regulatory obligations

- (iii) Miscarriages of justice - Endangering the health or safety of individuals
- (iv) Abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable people
- (v) Bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation
- (vi) Attempts to conceal any of the above

5. Safeguarding

Any concern relating to the safety or welfare of a child must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy and statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE).

Safeguarding concerns must not be investigated internally beyond appropriate referral to the DSL.

6. Principles

When raising a concern under this policy:

- (i) Individuals are encouraged to act in good faith
- (ii) Confidentiality will be respected as far as possible
- (iii) No individual will suffer any detriment, victimisation or disadvantage as a result of raising a concern in good faith
- (iv) Concerns will be taken seriously and investigated fairly

No action will be taken against an individual if a concern raised in good faith is not substantiated. Disciplinary action may be considered only where a concern is proven to have been raised maliciously or in bad faith.

7. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should normally be raised internally in the first instance. This may be done by contacting:

- (i) Your Line Manager
- (ii) The Head
- (iii) The Senior Deputy Head
- (iv) A member of the Senior Leadership Team.

If the concern involves a senior member of staff, or if the individual feels unable to raise the matter through these routes, the concern may be raised with the Chair of Advisory Board.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Individuals may, if they wish, raise concerns through a colleague or representative.

8. External Reporting

If an individual reasonably believes that their concern has not been addressed appropriately, or that it would be inappropriate to raise it internally, they may raise the matter with an appropriate external body, including:

- (i) The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)
- (ii) The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- (iii) The Police (where a criminal offence may have occurred)
- (iv) ACAS or a professional or legal adviser.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent an individual from making a protected disclosure in accordance with the law.

9. Investigation and Outcome

All concerns raised under this policy will be considered carefully and, where appropriate, investigated. The School will ensure that investigations are conducted fairly and sensitively, respecting the rights of all parties involved.

Where possible and appropriate, the individual raising the concern will be informed of the outcome, subject to legal and confidentiality constraints.

10. Protection from Victimisation

The School will not tolerate harassment, victimisation or retaliation against anyone who raises a concern in good faith. Any such behaviour will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

11. Review and Oversight

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure that it remains compliant with legal requirements and statutory guidance.