

Whistleblowing Policy

“Absolutely without fail – challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong”
(reproduced with acknowledgement to “Sounding the Alarm” – Barnardos).

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1. Introduction

Whistle blowing is the term used for an employee raising concerns about practices and procedures in their workplace.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues, or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young persons who are targeted.

These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare. Don't think "what if I'm wrong", think "what if I'm right".

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Encourage individuals affected to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated and that their confidentiality will be respected.
- Let all staff in the trust know how to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing in or by the trust.
- Set clear procedures for how the trust will respond to such concerns.
- Let all staff know the protection available to them if they raise a whistle-blowing concern.
- Assure staff that they will not be victimised for raising a legitimate concern through the steps set out in the policy even if they turn out to be mistaken (though vexatious or malicious concerns may be considered a disciplinary issue).

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. The policy applies to all employees or other workers who provide services to the trust in any capacity including self-employed consultants or contractors who provide services on a personal basis and agency workers.

3. Legislation

The requirement to have clear whistle-blowing procedures in place is set out in the [Academy Trust Handbook](#).

This policy has been written in line with the above document, as well as [government guidance on whistleblowing](#). We also take into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Definition of Whistleblowing

Whistle-blowing covers concerns made that report wrongdoing that is “in the public interest”.

Examples of whistleblowing include (but are not limited to):

- Criminal offences, such as fraud or corruption
- Pupils’ or staffs’ health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirements
- Breaches of financial management procedures
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest
- Damage to the environment
- Poor or unsafe practice
- A member of Staff behaving in an inappropriate way towards a pupil
- Potential failures in the school’s safeguarding regime
- A belief that the DSL is not furthering a concern about a pupil that has been raised

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above.

Not all concerns about the trust count as whistleblowing. For example, personal staff grievances such as bullying or harassment do not usually count as whistle-blowing. If something affects a staff member as an individual, or relates to an individual employment contract, this is likely a grievance.

When staff have a concern, they should consider whether it would be better to follow our staff grievance or complaints procedures.

5. Reasons for Whistleblowing

Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour:

- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself
- What stops people from whistle blowing
- Stating a chain of events which spirals
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

6. How to Raise a Concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- Approach any of the DSLs:
 - Sian Hoskins
 - Anne Napier

- Emails can be sent in complete confidence to safeguarding@hampsteadhillschool.co.uk
- If your concern is about your immediate manager/principal, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, you can contact:
 - Ofsted Whistleblowing line on 0300 123 3155
 - Camden Council's confidential and independent helpline for protected disclosure on 0800 734199
 - The NSPCC Whistleblowing line on 0800 028 0285

You can get free, confidential advice from Protect formerly known as Public Concern at Work. If you have witnessed wrongdoing at work and are unsure about what to do, a Protect adviser can help you decide whether and/or how to raise your concern.

- <https://www.pcaw.org.uk/>
- Advice line: 020 7404 6609 and 020 3117 2550
- Email: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk

Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest. Ideally, you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.

A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

7. Self-Reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

8. Further Advice and Support


It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your senior leadership team or from our local council LADO officer.

LADO for Camden is Sonia Forbes – her email is LADO@camden.gov.uk.

Her telephone number is 020 7974 4556.

9. Links to other Policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Last Review	November 2022
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