



Whistle blowing Policy

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<i>Confirmed by Governors on:</i>	<i>June 2018</i>
<i>Due for reviewed:</i>	<i>June 2021</i>
<i>Reviewed:</i>	<i>07th June 2018</i>
<i>The person responsible for monitoring this policy statement and monitoring and evaluating its implementation is:</i>	<i>Mr M McCann / Jackie Boniface</i>

Introduction

Greenbank school is committed to conducting its running with honesty and integrity. It expects all Employees to maintain high standards of openness, probity and accountability in accordance with their own Code of Conduct.

From time to time there is a risk of things going wrong or suspicious practices occurring therefore, by expecting these high standards we hope to prevent such situations occurring and if they do occur then we will be able to address them effectively.

This policy covers all Employees, Governors, Volunteers, Agency workers and Visitors.

Aims of this policy

The aims of this policy are:

- To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected as far as possible.
- To provide staff with guidance as how to raise those concerns.
- To reassure staff that they should be able to raise those concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- To encourage and enable staff to raise serious concerns within the school rather than outside, as premature or unnecessary publicity may damage the Schools reputation, impede proper investigations or hurt individuals.

What is a Whistle blower?

A Whistle blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the instances listed within the legislation information below.

If a person has any genuine concerns relating to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of the Schools activities then it should be reported under this policy.

Legislation

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 was introduced to protect employees who expose serious wrongdoing in the workplace. It applies where malpractice is disclosed involving:

- Criminal activity;
- A breach of regulatory, administrative and common law;
- A miscarriage of justice;
- Danger to health and safety;
- Unauthorised use of public funds;
- Possible fraud and corruption;
- Sexual, physical or financial abuse of clients; and
- A breach of the Schools or the Boroughs internal policies and procedures, including our own Code of Conduct.

The act protects you from victimisation where you reasonably believe the information, and are acting in good faith.

A disclosure is protected if you have an honest and reasonable suspicion that a malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur. As an employee you can raise the matter with your line manager who will refer it to one of the below, or if you prefer you can go directly yourself to:

- The head teacher
- The chair of governors
- CWAC Councils monitoring officer

Purpose and Scope

This policy covers the reporting of malpractice, the information needed to be recorded and the steps to follow.

The procedures have been introduced to provide employees with a secure basis for reporting malpractice or suspicions of malpractice, in the knowledge that the matter will be treated confidentially.

This policy should not be used for complaints; staff should refer to other available policies, for example, the Grievance Policy or the Dignity at work Policy.

If you are unsure whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from your Line manager, the Head Teacher or the Counties monitoring officer.

Confidentiality / Anonymous Allegations

The school will protect the confidentiality of all matters raised by concerned employees and every effort will be made to keep their identity secret. If there is a breach of such confidentiality then the employee raising the concern can take appropriate action under the grievance procedures.

However, the school will strongly encourage any disclosure not to be made anonymously and where possible put your name to your allegation. This is because concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those raised by an identified individual.

Anonymous allegations will, however, be considered at the discretion of the school. In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issue raised;
- The credibility of the concern; and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Untrue allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, as an employee you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

Procedures

Raising a concern

You can raise your concern orally, (i.e. face to face or over the phone) or in writing. If you write, mark the envelope 'personal, private and confidential' and if the concern is of a serious nature, hand deliver the envelope to the person you wish to report the matter to.

Whichever way you choose, please give as much information as you can.

Remember to also give your name, job title and say if you do not want to be contacted at work (if so, give your home address and phone number).

You should include the following:

- Background information;
- Information as to why you are concerned;
- Details of any other procedures which you have already used, and what happened;
- The names of the person/s involved and where they work (if applicable);
- Dates or periods of time relating to the matter;
- The names and roles of anyone else who may support your concern.

The earlier you express your concern, the easier it will be to take action.

Although you will not be expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds for the concern.

You may find it easier to raise the matter jointly if there is another person who has the same concern, and will support your allegation.

You would be advised to invite your trade union representative, or another person, to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the raised concern. In this case you can remain anonymous when the concern is first raised, but you may have to be involved personally if the matter goes further.

How the School will respond

Whoever is dealing with your concern, The head teacher, The chair of governors or the CWAC Councils monitoring officer they will firstly decide whether to carry out an investigation and determine which School procedure it is appropriate to use.

If it is decided that the matter should be taken further under Whistle blowing procedures, the concerns raised may be:

- Investigated by an investigating officer appointed by the school;
- Referred to the police and/or Safeguarding Team;
- Referred to the schools auditor.

You may also be interviewed by the person investigating the matter.

In order to protect individuals accused of a possible malpractice, enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation. If urgent action is required, this will take place before an investigation is undertaken.

What will you be told

The person to whom you have raised your concern will contact you in writing within 10 working days detailing the following:

- Acknowledge that the concern has been received;
- Indicating how the School intends to deal with the matter;
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- Detailing any initial enquiries that have been made; and
- Informing you whether further investigations will take place (and if not, why not).

The amount of contact you have with the people considering the matter will depend on the type of concern, the potential difficulties of the investigation and the availability of information. Wherever possible, you will be told the final outcome of any investigation.

The school will take steps to minimise any difficulties you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For example, if required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the school will arrange for you to receive advice about the procedure.

Protection and support for Whistle blowers

It is understandable that Whistle blowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussion. The School aims to encourage openness and will support anyone who raises genuine concern under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistle blowers must not suffer detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern.

If any individual believes that they have suffered any such treatment, then this should be raised with your union or CWAC whistle blowing hotline. If the matter is not remedied then the matter can be raised formally using the CWAC grievance policy.

Whistle blowers must not be threatened or retaliated against in any way; involvement in such conduct may result in disciplinary action. In some cases the Whistle blower could have a right to sue the individual personally in an employment tribunal.

CWAC also operates the Employee Assistance Programme that offers around-the-clock, free confidential assistance.

The Responsible Officer

The head teacher has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy.

All employees are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing.

KEY CONTACTS

Head Teacher	Mike McCann 01606 288 028 / 07788538363 head@greenbank.cheshire.sch.uk
Head of Care	Jackie Boniface 01606 288 028 / 07846778906 jackieb@greenbank.cheshire.sch.uk
Head of Governors	Mr Phillip Hopwood phopwood@greenbank.cheshire.sch.uk
Whistleblowing hotline	01244 977 223 whistleblowing@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Councils Employee Assistance Programme	0800 116 4368 www.lifestyleaction.net
Public concern at work (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline (020) 7404 6609 E-mail: helpline@pcaw.co.uk www.pcaw.co.uk
NSPCC whistleblowing helpline	Helpline 0800 028 0285 8.00-20.00 Monday - Friday E-Mail: help@nspcc.org.uk