

# BRIDGEWATER SCHOOL

WORSLEY, MANCHESTER

M28 2WQ

## WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

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

### **Elements of the Policy**

The School policy on whistle-blowing is intended to demonstrate that the School:

- Will not tolerate malpractice;
- Respects the confidentiality of staff and pupils raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as it is consistent with handling the issues effectively;
- Will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate. This includes information about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the School's safeguarding regime and provision for mediation and dispute resolution;
- 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.

### **Procedure**

This procedure is separate from the School's adopted procedures regarding grievances. Employees should not use the whistle-blowing procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation.

This procedure is to enable members of staff or pupils to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the School.

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.

### **Confidentiality**

Employees or pupils 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. The person listening to the concerns should make notes of the meeting and these should be agreed, signed and dated by themselves and the person raising the concern.

If there is evidence of criminal activity then the police will, in all cases, be informed.

### **The Investigation**

A member of staff or pupil will be at liberty to express their concern to the Head, Deputies, or the Bursar. If a pupil is raising the concern, it will be usual to involve the parents/guardians of that pupil at an early stage in any investigation. Anyone who raises a concern must be quite clear that a wrong-doing is being reported and that action is needed.

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

A member of staff who is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with will have the right to raise it, in confidence and informally, with the Chairman of the Governors either by telephone, letter or other form of communication.

### **External Procedures**

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 employee reasonably believes:

- a) exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- b) the School would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- c) they believe that they would be victimised by the School;
- d) the Secretary of State has ordered it.

### **Concerns about a Child**

The new 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) September 2023 - Part One, Information for all School and College Staff' has been published and the school's Safeguarding Policy follows the DfEE guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'.

Although it is usual to report any concerns about child safety matters to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL – Mrs Nairn) or Deputies (Mr P Lyons, Mr M Barker or Mr M Rooney), all staff are able to report the matter to Salford Social Services directly, and it is their duty to do so.

If a member of staff refers their concerns to Salford Social Services they should at the earliest possible opportunity, inform the DSL or Deputies of their actions.

### **Malicious Accusations**

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

### **Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation**

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

### **Important Contacts**

Whistleblowing Advice Line (NSPCC)

Call [0800 028 0285](tel:08000280285)

Email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Or if you think a child is in immediate danger

[Police 999](tel:999)

National NSPCC helpline [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000)

Salford Children's Services [0161 603 4500](tel:01616034500)

**Reviewed by the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team – November 2023**