

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.

Staff are also required to report any “low level concerns” regarding the behaviour of themselves, colleagues, supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors. Please refer to the separate low levels concern policy for further details of this process.

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 Chair of the Governors either by telephone, letter or other form of communication.

Managing allegations against staff and the LADO Referral path

Where a whistleblowing report or allegation indicates that a member of staff, volunteer, or contractor has met the “harm threshold”—meaning they

- have behaved in a way that has harmed a child,
- or may have harmed a child;
- have possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;

- have behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- or have behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children;

The school will immediately initiate the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) referral pathway.

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 2026 - Part One** has been published and the school's Safeguarding Policy follows the DfEE guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026'. All staff must read, understand and comply with these frameworks.

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 W. Amin 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 Children's 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

Email help@nspcc.org.uk

Or if you think a child is in immediate danger

Police 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 – September 2026