

MORE HOUSE SCHOOL

POLICY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN: WHISTLE BLOWING

Rationale:

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Headmaster and/or if necessary due to the circumstances, the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the school's Independent Person, Mrs Mariola Boyd. Although this can be difficult, this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. It might be that you are 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. It is often the most vulnerable children or young persons who are targeted and therefore this policy has been put in place in order to help safeguard their welfare. This policy has been developed in accordance with guidance issued in *Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2016*.

Purposes:

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Give staff clear information regarding the reasons why concerns should be raised.
2. Give staff clear information on how to raise such concerns.
3. Give broad details of what happens when such concerns are raised.

Broad Guidelines:

Reasons for whistle blowing:

- each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behavior;
- to prevent the problem worsening or widening;
- to protect or reduce risks to others;
- to prevent becoming implicated yourself.
- to ensure what you believe is 'wrong doing' is highlighted to the appropriate persons so as to enable them to consider the authenticity of the claim and its ramifications, including the consequences upon others.

Reasons that stop people from whistle blowing:

- starting 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.

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.
- If there is immediate concern for the welfare of any child you must speak to one of the Designated Persons for Child Protection, or the Headmaster, in person or by telephone immediately; do not rely on e-mail or a voicemail message.

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- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- If you have concerns about a staff-member or other adult working within the school, you must contact the Headmaster in person or by telephone as soon as possible.
- If your concern is about the Headmaster, the concern should be reported to the Chairman of the Board of Governors directly, whose contact details are available in the school office.
- In addition, should you feel you wish to report the concern to someone outside the school, you can contact the Independent Person, Mrs Mariola Boyd, on telephone number 01252 797610 (610 internally).
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response; do not 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.
- Any adult may contact the Local Authority's Designated Officer for allegations of abuse by telephoning 0300 200 1006, or contact the police directly by telephoning 999.

What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- The 'School' as 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.

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-members have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line 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.

Conclusion:

It is recognised that whistle-blowing can be difficult and stressful. However, advice and support is available from your Head of Department, the Headmaster, the Designated Persons for Child Protection and the Bursar.

Appendix A - The following School policies and documents form important continuations of this policy:

- Child Protection Incorporating Safeguarding policy
- Communication policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Equal Opportunities policy
- Managing Allegations of Abuse policy

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- Pupil Concerns policy
- Stress in the Workplace policy