



## Whistleblowing Policy

<b>Person responsible</b>	SLT
<b>Last update</b>	Summer 2024
<b>Frequency of Review</b>	Annually
<b>Date of next review by Governors</b>	Summer 2025

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. It applies when the complainant has no vested interest but rather is an observer. It is not the same as making a complaint.

The term 'whistleblowing' is sometimes confused with the need to report safeguarding or professional concerns about another member of staff or adult in the school. Whistleblowing is about systemic or procedural failures and is not only confined to issues about staff conduct. (Andrew Halls, Safeguarding, November 2016)

## **2. STATEMENT OF INTENT**

St Christopher's The Hall School is committed to open and honest communication between all members of the community. To that end we nurture a culture in which employees, parents and volunteers feel safe to raise, without fear of reprisal, a concern they may have about misconduct or malpractice.

The wellbeing and safety of the children is our prime concern; it must take priority over any loyalty towards work colleagues.

All concerns raised in accordance with this Policy will be promptly investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

## **3. AIMS**

- To assist staff to acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies, particularly where the welfare of children may be at risk
- To enable and encourage individuals to raise genuine and legitimate concerns.
- To support staff to take an active role in the elimination of poor or insufficient practices, malpractice or wrongdoing.
- To ensure any concerns raised are investigated appropriately and confidentially.
- To ensure protection to those making the complaint against any form of retaliation or victimisation, as long as the disclosure must, in the reasonable belief of the worker making the disclosure, be made in the public interest

This policy covers concerns that fall outside the scope of our Complaints Policy - Grievance Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure.

## **4. PROCEDURES**

Having observed something that gives cause for serious concern (this may be to do with child safeguarding or welfare, health and safety, financial malpractice, illegality, unauthorised breach of confidentiality...), the following action should be taken:

- Report your concern to the Headteacher. If your concern is about the Head, report to the Chair of Governors.
- If you are worried about how to raise a concern, you should seek independent advice through e.g. your union, professional body.
- Record what you witnessed in writing including where possible any background, names, other witnesses, dates, times and places as well as the nature of your concern. If for any reason you do not wish to put your concern in writing, the person to whom you report will make a written record and ask you to sign to confirm its accuracy. Keep a copy of the written record.
- Do not investigate the matter yourself or tell those you suspect to be involved or accuse or approach individuals or tell anyone other than the Headteacher etc
- You will receive a written acknowledgement of your concern normally within one week of its receipt.
- The Headteacher or Chair will investigate your concern. You will be informed of what action is being taken normally within two weeks of the original report. You will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and of its outcome.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome you should take your concern to Ofsted . They can be contacted: or through a dedicated whistleblowing hotline – 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 6.00pm) or by email to the whistleblowing team – [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)
- Or Independent Schools Inspectorate 020 7600 0100 ([concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net))

## 5. TIME FRAMES

To be realistic and reasonable, timeframes may be adjusted at any stage, by the person dealing with the complaint, if initial timeframes cannot be met. The complainant should be informed of changes in the timeframes. School Holidays, weekends, Bank/Public Holidays, Inset/Training Days and other school breaks/holidays will not be included in the timeframes and will not commence/continue until the next full day of school time.

NB. If your concern is about an immediate or current risk to a child, you must follow the procedure laid out in our Safeguarding Policy.

## 6. CONFIDENTIALITY

If a concern is raised anonymously it is very difficult to investigate.

The Head and/or Chair of Governors will respect and protect a person's identity when a concern is raised. However, in certain circumstances identities will have to be revealed to the person complained against and the complainant may be asked to provide written evidence in support of the complaint. If a person's identity is to be disclosed, he or she will be informed before the disclosure and given reasons why this was necessary.

## 7. REFERENCES

This policy has been informed by:

DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education'

The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (April 2013)

Whistleblowing: Guidance and Code of Practice for Employers (March 2015)

The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)

**See also St Christopher's: Complaints Policy, Staff Discipline Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Health & Safety Policy, Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy**