



ALLEESTREE WOODLANDS SCHOOL

Whistleblowing Policy

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Enabling aspiration and achievement through delivery of a knowledge-rich curriculum underpinned by our CORE values:

COURAGE

OPTIMISM

REGARD

ENDEAVOUR

Whistleblowing Policy – Statement of Intent

The staff and governors of Allestree Woodlands School seek to run all aspects of the school business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. In the event that members of school staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, we have established a whistleblowing policy.

1. Introduction

Allestree Woodlands School is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. We recognise that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and have therefore developed a system, which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the school.

This policy is a code of practice, which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially. It aims to provide a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Throughout this policy, the term “whistleblower” denotes the person raising the concern or making the complaint. It is not meant in a pejorative sense and is entirely consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies published in May 1996.

The provisions of this policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety and not matters of more general grievance, which would be dealt with under the grievance procedures.

The policy provides for a concern to be raised confidentially, investigated by an appropriate individual and reported back to the whistleblower.

Allestree Woodlands School is committed to creating a climate of trust and openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved.

Concerns are able to be raised confidentially and will be investigated impartially by an appropriate person such as a governor or a member of the Senior Leadership Team or, if necessary, by an appropriate external party.

At all times the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be respected, wherever possible.

When might this policy apply?

Staff should consider whether the action of concern is illegal, breaches school policies, puts others in danger or involved a cover up. Whistle-blowing covers concerns made that report wrongdoing that is in the public interest or unlawful.

The type of activity or behaviour which we consider will be dealt with under this policy includes but is not limited to:

- Criminal offences such as fraud or corruption
- Pupils' or staff health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Breaches of financial management procedures
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest
- Damage to the environment

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above.

Not all concerns about the school count as whistle-blowing. For example, personal staff grievances such as bullying or harassment do not usually count as whistle-blowing. If something affects a staff member as an individual, or relates to an individual employment contract, this is likely a grievance.

What action should the whistleblower take?

Allestree Woodlands School encourages the whistleblower to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and explain the behaviour or activity. We have designated the following individuals to deal specifically with such matters and the whistleblower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Individual	Address	Contact (phone)	Contact (email)
Headteacher	Via the school marked	Via the school 01332 551921	headteacher@woodlands.derby.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	"Private and Confidential"	Via the school 01332 551921	chairofgovernors@woodlands.derby.sch.uk

The whistleblower may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in written form marked "private and confidential" and addressed to one of the above individuals. The names of the individuals, if not known by the whistleblower, can be found from the school's website, www.woodlands.derby.sch.uk

All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible.

Alternatively if the whistleblower considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise within the internal environment of the school, the matter should be directed to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and/or the Department for Education (DfE)

In addition, information and advice can be obtained from the charity Protect which has a free confidential whistleblowing advice line. This charity offers free legal advice in certain circumstances to people concerned about serious malpractice at work. Contact details for this charity are as follows:



Name: Protect (formerly called Public Concern at Work)
Phone: Free confidential Whistleblowing advice line: 020 3117 2520
Website: protect-advice.org.uk

2. Investigating the concern

When a concern is received by the headteacher (or the chair of governors if the concern relates to the headteacher) - referred to from here as the 'recipient' - they will:

- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative
- Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information. If it becomes apparent the concern is not of a whistle-blowing nature, the recipient should handle the concern in line with the appropriate policy/procedure
- Reiterate, at this meeting, that they are protected from any unfair treatment or risk of dismissal as a result of raising the concern. If the concern is found to be malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action may be taken
- Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there is:
 - The recipient should then arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the headteacher if appropriate. In some cases, they may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In other cases, they may need to report the matter to the police
 - The person who raised the concern should be informed of how the matter is being investigated and an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps

3. Outcome of the Investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred. The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified, and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, the headteacher, governors and other staff, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

Whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

4. Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible Allestree Woodlands School seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistleblower and will as far as practical protect him/her from being identified and from reprisals. Any reports will be written and investigations conducted so as to protect the identification of the whistleblower wherever possible. Good practice may involve use of "they" in reports so as to minimise the chance of identification of the whistleblower, for example.

The individual receiving the allegation, the headteacher, the chair of governors, the investigating officer and others will respect the confidentiality of the whistleblower.

No attempt to victimise the whistleblower or attempts to prevent concerns being raised will be tolerated, and such actions may result in disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

5. Raising unfounded malicious concerns

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances.

6. Conclusion

Whilst our procedures and systems within Allestree Woodlands School, in terms of its systems of internal control, both financial and non-financial, and the external regulatory environment in which the school operates are designed to prevent fraud or impropriety, any such concerns are thoroughly investigated.

This whistleblowing policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the school. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be actioned.