



ALLEESTREE WOODLANDS SCHOOL

Whistleblowing Policy

DATE OF POLICY ADOPTION BY GOVERNORS:	07 December 2020
AUTHOR/S OF POLICY:	Governing Body
DATE OF LAST REVIEW:	December 2023
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	December 2025

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.

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, including in any investigation report.

If the whistleblower is unsatisfied with the result of the investigation, there will be a right of appeal.

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

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.

2. When might this policy apply?

The type of activity or behaviour, which we consider will be dealt with under this policy, includes:

- manipulation of accounting records and finances
- inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- decision-making for personal gain
- any criminal activity
- abuse of position
- fraud and deceit
- serious breaches of school procedures which may advantage a particular party (for example tampering with tender documentation, failure to register a personal interest)
- Safeguarding concerns not being dealt with satisfactorily

3. 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

4. How will the matter be progressed?

The individual in receipt of the whistleblower's information or allegation will appoint an investigating officer who is able to investigate objectively while maintaining confidentiality; this may be a governor or member of the school's Senior Leadership Team or an appropriate external individual. The investigation will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the matter raised has foundation and if so, whether the matter can be resolved internally. The initial investigation may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of school staff, legal or personnel advisors, the police, the DfE and the ESFA.

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation, and a report written with recommendations. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors as appropriate, will consider the report and its recommendations and determine how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third party referral such as to the police.

The whistleblower will be informed of the results of the investigation and any action taken to address the matter.

Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the governing board.

5. Appeal

If the whistleblower is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, then the whistleblower may lodge an appeal within ten working days with the governing body by contacting the Chair of Governors, or if the complaint is against the Chair of Governors, by contacting the Headteacher. The notice of appeal should outline the nature of the appeal.

An appeal will be considered by a panel of three governors not previously familiar with the matter. The appeal panel may, as it sees fit, require further investigation and/or may require a hearing for the whistleblower to explain the grounds for appeal. The decision of the appeal panel will be given to the whistleblower in writing and is final.

Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the governing board.

Any further concerns should be directed to the ESFA and/or the DfE.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. History

5 th March 2014	Adopted by Governing Body on
17 th October 2016	Reviewed and updated by the Governors' Personnel Committee on
16 th October 2017	Reviewed and updated by the Governors' Personnel Committee on
7 th December 2020	Reviewed and updated by the Board of Governors updating individuals, introducing right of appeal, and a statement of intent, clarifying the role of the investigating officer and the report and clarifying confidentiality requirements.