
OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL

Whistle Blowing Policy



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Overstone Park, Northampton, NN6 0DT

Whistle Blowing Policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator
September 2024	August 2025	Mrs M Brown - Principal Mrs D York – DSL Miss A West – DSL

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Public Interest Disclosure (Compensation) Order 1999
- Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 1999
- Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) (Amendment) Order 2003
- Equality Act 2010
- Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Independent School Standards 2015

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website (Cabinet Office)
- Data Protection: a toolkit for schools (DfE)
- Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - Information Commissioner's Office

We are aware that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) has entirely replaced the previous Data Protection Act (DPA) making changes to many previous data protection rules and regulations that schools, academies and other educational establishments adhered to under the DPA. The principal aim of the GDPR is to strengthen and unify the safety and security of all data held within an organisation.

Principles

This policy aims to provide employees with an avenue to raise concerns internally and receive feedback on any action taken. It demonstrates how employees can take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the management response and reassures employees that they will be protected from harassment or victimisation from co-workers for raising concerns.

‘Whistleblowing’ is a term used to refer to the disclosure by employees of malpractice – internally or externally – as well as illegal acts, or omissions at work. The policy is intended to cover concerns which fall outside of the scope of policies that deal with standards of

behaviour at work including disciplinary, grievance, bullying and harassment policies. Employees are encouraged to consider the provisions in these policies as appropriate

We believe whistle blowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing in the workplace which is regarded as making a disclosure in the public interest. We actively encourage all school personnel and visitors to school to report any serious concerns they may have about any aspect of the school such as:

- health and safety concerns
- damage to the school environment
- a criminal offence that has taken place or is about to take place
- disobeying the law
- the covering up of a wrong doing
- the conduct of its personnel or others acting on behalf of the school.

We believe school personnel, supply staff, and students on work experience are protected by law if they make a disclosure on any of the above, that is if they think what they are reporting is true, that they think they are telling the right person and if they believe their disclosure is in the public interest. If the law is broken when a disclosure is made

We understand that those wishing to make a disclosure may do so to the Principal, to a member of the local authority, to a prescribed person such as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, to a legal adviser or to a Member of Parliament.

We believe that where the concern relates to an individual's own employment the school's Grievance Policy must be used. However, if the concern relates to something which is against the school's policies, falls below standards of practice or amounts to improper conduct then the procedures in this policy must be used.

We are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates into all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We want everyone connected with this school to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

We acknowledge the findings of the Race Disparity Audit that clearly shows how people of different ethnicities are treated across the public services of health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.

The educational section of the audit that covers: differences by region; attainment and economic disadvantage; exclusions and abuse; and destinations, has a significant importance for the strategic planning of this school.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

The Whistleblowing (Raising Concerns at Work) policy and procedure aims to:

Encourage employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns.

Provide avenues for employees to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.

Allow employees to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with The Children's Society's response; and

Reassure employees that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for disclosing information in good faith.

- To encourage all school personnel to report any serious concerns about any aspect of the school or the conduct of its personnel or others acting on behalf of the school.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Principal

The Principal will:

- ensure all school personnel and volunteers are aware of and comply with this policy;
- work in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure all school personnel and volunteers are aware of and comply with this policy;
- encourage all school personnel to raise any concerns they have regarding actual or potential breaches of duty or a failure by the school;
- provide support for a member of staff who has raised a concern;
- provide support for a member of staff against whom allegations have been made;
- keep both parties informed of all progress during any investigation;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by speaking with school personnel, parents and governors (proprietors);
- annually report on the success and development of this policy.

Role of School Personnel

School personnel have a duty to speak out against and report any:

- criminal offence that has been committed, is being committed or is about to be committed;
- person who has failed, is failing or is about to fail compliance with any legal obligation that they are subject to;
- miscarriage of justice that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- health and safety issue that has endangered, is endangering or is likely to endanger any person;
- damage to the school environment that has been committed, is being committed or is about to be committed.

However, school personnel must be aware that if they are treated unfairly after blowing the whistle they should consider taking their case to an employment tribunal.

School personnel have a duty to the school not to disclose confidential information. However, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 this does not prevent an employee from seeking independent advice nor discussing their concern with the charity Public Concern at Work.

School personnel should consider reporting any concerns to their line manager; the Principal; the local authority; their union or association; Ofsted; the Children's Commissioner; the NSPCC; or the whistle blowing charity Public Concern at Work.

But initially they should raise the concern internally before using a public agency.

School personnel must be aware that all raised concerns are investigated and every effort is made to ensure confidentiality for all parties. When a concern has been raised the following procedure must be followed:

Stage 1

- All concerns should be made in person or in writing.
- The person raising the concern may wish to receive help from the local authority or from their trade union representative.
- At any future meeting the employee may be accompanied by a colleague or their trade union representative.

Stage 2

- Within 10 working days the person with whom the concern has been registered acknowledges receipt in writing.
- The letter will state the following:
 - ☐ How the concern will be dealt with;
 - ☐ How long it will take to provide a final response;
 - ☐ Information on employee support services.

Stage 3

- After initial enquiries have been conducted, a decision will be made if an investigation should take place.
- The investigation will be either:
 - ☐ an internal investigation;
 - ☐ a referral to the police;
 - ☐ a referral to the Council Auditor;
 - ☐ an external independent enquiry.

Stage 4

- The employee will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation by the investigator.
- The employee has the right to take their concern to an independent body if they feel it has not been addressed adequately.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

- School Handbook/Prospectus;
- School website;
- Staff Handbook;
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops;
- School events;
- Meetings with school personnel;
- Written communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters;
- Annual report to parents;
- Information displays in the main school entrance;
- Text messages
- Email
- Social media:
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Virtual pin boards
 - School blog

Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers:
 - ☐ The school's whistle blowing procedures
 - ☐ Confidentiality

☐ Safeguarding and Child Protection

- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Principal:	Mrs M Brown	Date:	September 2024
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