

## **Whistleblowing policy**

### **Introduction**

Wynstones School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect working community members, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the School's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

### **Purpose**

- To encourage all members of our community to feel confident in raising concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice.
- To provide avenues for our community to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- To ensure that anybody in our community receives a response to their concerns and that anybody affected is aware of how to pursue them if he/she is not satisfied.
- To reassure all community members that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have made a disclosure that is in the public interest.

### **Definition**

Whistleblowing is when a working community member (or any stakeholder for that matter) knows, or suspects, that there is some wrongdoing occurring within the school and alerts the employer or the relevant authority accordingly.

All members of the working community are protected by the Public Disclosure Act 1998.

### **Actions to be taken by Working Community Members**

If a working community member knows, or suspects, that some wrongdoing is occurring within the school, he or she should raise the matter immediately with the relevant Chair of School or Team Leader. If the working community member does not know who to approach, he or she should, in the first instance, talk to the Business Manager.

### **Possible situations**

Although this list is not exhaustive, examples of situations in which it might be appropriate for a community member to report a wrongdoing include:

- Concerns regarding a breach, or potential breach regarding the safeguarding of children
- A breach, or potential breach, of health and safety legislation
- Financial irregularities
- Harassment of a colleague, customer or other individual
- Damage to the environment
- Concern regarding the suspicion or knowledge that a criminal offence has been committed.
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice.
- The unauthorised use of public funds.
- Other unethical conduct.
- Actions which are unprofessional, inappropriate or conflict with a general understanding of what is right and wrong.

### **Action to be taken by the responsible person**

Any appointed individual, who is informed by a working community member of potential wrongdoing, will take immediate action to investigate the situation. In doing so, that individual will take every possible step to maintain the anonymity of the working community member who has made the allegation of wrongdoing. The working community member who has raised the issue of a wrongdoing will be kept informed of any investigation that is taking place. The working community member will also be informed of the outcome of the investigation. It might not always be appropriate to tell the working community member the detail of any action that is taken, but the working community member will be informed if action is taken.

### **Alerting outside bodies to a potential wrongdoing**

A working community member should always, in the first instance, talk to their Chair of School or Team Leader about a potential wrongdoing. In cases where the wrong doing involves the Education Leader or College of Teachers, or where the individual is still concerned, despite a formal response, the matter should be directed to the nominated Council members (currently Peter Cooke and Ted Yates) on the Council of Trustees for the school. If the working community member is still not satisfied with the response, he or she is entitled to contact a relevant external body to express their concerns. In doing this the working community member should:

- Have a reasonable belief that the allegation is based on correct facts
- Not be making any personal gain from the revelations
- Make the disclosure to a relevant body
- Not act maliciously or make false allegations. A “relevant body “is likely to be a regulatory body (e.g. the Health and Safety Executive, or the Safeguarding Board).

## **Contacting the media**

The media is not a relevant external body. Working community members should not contact the media with allegations about the school.

## **Protection against detriment**

Any working community member who takes action under the Public Disclosure Act 1998 will be protected from any detriment in relation to any allegations that are made. If the working community member does not follow the procedure set out, which encompasses the requirements of the Public Disclosure Act 1998, the protection against detriment will not apply. Disclosing information in an inappropriate way (e.g. Contacting the media) could result in disciplinary action being taken against the working community member, which could include dismissal.

## **Contact Details**

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Created: 01/12/2013 HCK

Review Date: 01/12/2014 HCK

Reviewed: 21/04/2014 AL