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Whistleblowing policy

1. **Wrongdoing at work:**

This procedure is designed to deal with disclosure of information by an employee which relates to some danger, bribery, corruption, fraud or other unlawful or unethical conduct in the workplace. Employment legislation governs the making of disclosures concerning workplace activities and is intended to protect employees who blow the whistle on bad practice from being subjected to any detriment or from being unfairly dismissed as a result. This procedure is available to all employees who discover something they feel that they should pass on in the interests of the public. All types of wrongdoing are included whether they are acts committed by fellow employees, faults in School procedures or oversights which should be rectified. The procedure should be used even in the event that the act or omission causing you concern has finished or has not yet started. Employees have a duty of care to report any wrong doing at work.

2. **Safeguarding:**

Nothing within this policy is intended to prevent staff from complying with their statutory obligations in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2021). In particular:

a) **Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy:**

You should raise any initial safeguarding concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

b) **Whistleblowing Policy:**

You should follow this procedure to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices at the School or potential failures by the School or staff to properly safeguard the welfare of pupils if you are concerned that the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are not being followed correctly.

c) **Children's Social Care:**

In exceptional circumstances, or if at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care immediately.

i) **Grievances:**

This procedure should not however be used where you have a complaint relating to your personal circumstances in the workplace. The Grievance Procedure contained in the Employment Manual should be used in such cases.

ii) **Detriment:**

Provided that this procedure is used appropriately and correctly you will not suffer any detriment as a result of reporting the wrongdoing. A failure to follow this procedure

may however make the disclosure unreasonable and the protection given to you by this procedure may be lost.

Stage One

iii) Procedure:

You should disclose the suspected wrongdoing first to your line manager. In the event that your line manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you shall be entitled to proceed directly to Stage Two of this procedure.

iv) Response:

You can expect a response detailing to whom the disclosure has been notified or any action taken within seven days of your line manager becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage Two

v) Procedure:

If no response is forthcoming after seven days, or if your line manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you shall be entitled to notify the Head, as appropriate.

vi) Response:

You can expect a response detailing any action taken within seven days of the Head becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage Three

vii) Procedure:

If no such response is forthcoming you should once more inform the Head of the disclosure.

Stage Four

viii) Outside body:

If you do not receive a response within seven days, you shall be entitled to notify a relevant and appropriate body outside the School which may include:

- The Local Authority Designated Officer
- Children's Social Care
- The Health and Safety Executive
- The Environment Agency
- The Information Commissioner
- The Department for Education (DfE)
- The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
- The Police
- The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)
- The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

ix) Bypassing the procedure:

In extreme circumstances you will have the right to raise your concern directly with a relevant and appropriate outside body without first having followed the stages above. This may however cause damage to the School and its reputation as well as constitute a breach of your own duty of confidentiality towards the School and this action should only be taken in extreme circumstances and after careful thought.

x) Extreme circumstances:

The School will consider extreme circumstances exist where you have a reasonable belief that: the School will subject you to detriment if you inform your line manager in accordance with Stage One above or if you inform the Head in accordance with Stage Two or Stage Three; a cover-up is being mounted by the School; or a disclosure made previously to your line manager or the Head in accordance with the stages above has not prompted a satisfactory response.

xi) The media:

Even where extreme circumstances are thought to exist, you should under no circumstances approach a commercial body or the media with details of the suspected wrongdoing. If you approach any such body and / or where your concern is disclosed for personal gain, the School may consider this to be gross misconduct and immediate disciplinary action may be taken against you.

xii) Queries:

If you have any queries about this procedure you should contact the Head.