



WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At Newbridge Preparatory School we are committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability. We encourage staff and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns. In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership. This procedure encourages staff to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, rather than over-looking a problem or raising the matter outside. It applies to all staff and supply staff and those contractors working on the premises, for example, cleaners.

It is recognised that whistle blowing may engender feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or that staff may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in the behaviour that is causing concern, continuing.

Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right

OTHER COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

This procedure is separate from the school Complaints Procedures. Child Protection issues should be reported according to the specific guidelines laid out in that policy. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affects an individual.

BEHAVIOUR THAT SHOULD CAUSE CONCERN

- Conduct which is likely to be a Child Protection allegation (Please see **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY** with particular regard to **HANDLING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND THE HEAD.**)
- Conduct which is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- Conduct that is likely to result in the school failing to comply with a legal obligation
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as pupils (Safeguarding) and other employees
- Damage to the environment

REASONS FOR WHISTLE-BLOWING

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening

This Policy applies to the whole school including the EYFS

- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

WHAT STOPS PEOPLE FROM WHISTLE-BLOWING

- Starting a chain of events which spirals
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed.

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can with your line manager. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why
- If your concern is about your immediate line manager approach the Headmistress. If your concern is about the Headmistress, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the Chair of Directors, Mrs Helen Hughes
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest
- Ideally you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence

CONFIDENTIALITY

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness.

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those that are attributed to a named individual. However anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at the school's discretion. In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

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SELF-REPORTING

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with the Headmistress so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

FURTHER ADVICE, SUPPORT AND CONTACT DETAILS

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from the Headmistress, Mrs S. Fisher or the Chair of Directors, Mrs H. Hughes.

SAF

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