

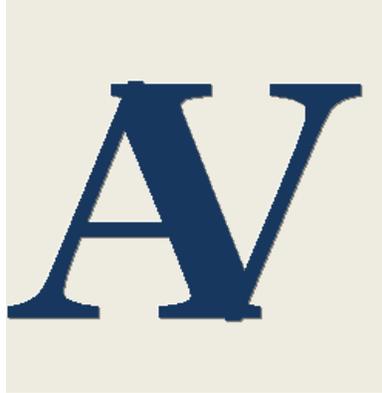


Policy: Whistle blowing

Date approved: 3rd September 2018

Approved by: Principal

Date to be reviewed by: 3rd September 2021



Abbey View School Whistle blowing Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies including the Safeguarding policy and the Staff conduct policy.

Abbey View School is committed to the highest possible standards and accountability of all of its activities. It also expects a high standard of conduct and integrity from its staff. Any member of staff who has a serious concern about any aspect of the School's work or the actions of any member of staff should voice their concerns through established internal channels without fear of victimisation or harassment.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Encourage staff to feel confident in raising concerns and to question and act upon their concerns
- Provide avenues for staff to raise these concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Allow staff to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the School's response
- Reassure them that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith in accordance with the procedure

This policy applies to all employees including those working on a temporary or casual basis.

There are existing procedures in place to allow staff to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment within the School's Discipline procedures.

This Policy is intended to cover reasonably serious concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. That concern may be about any of the following:

- A Criminal conviction that has been, is being or is likely to be committed
- Fraud and Corruption
- Unauthorised use of public funds
- A failure to comply with a legal obligation
- A serious health and safety risk relating to any individual
- A miscarriage of justice
- A damage to the environment
- Actions that are contrary to any of the School's policies
- Actions or behaviour that falls below established standards of practice
- Abuse and welfare of students or staff
- Harassment or victimisation of students or staff
- Any actions or concerns regarding practice that could result in a financial loss to the School
- The deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above matters
- Other unethical conduct

This list is not exhaustive.

Reasons for whistle blowing

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

- 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. 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
- Approach the Principal
- If your concern is about the Principal raise your concern with the Chair of Governors.
- 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 will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.
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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.

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 Principal 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 and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your Principal or your professional or trade union.

“Absolutely without fail – challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong” (reproduced with acknowledgement to “Sounding the Alarm”. Barnados)