

Model "Whistleblowing" Procedure for Schools

Reporting illegal or improper conduct or concerns about safeguarding children or young people.

Department: Schools' HR Advisory Team

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1 Introduction

1.1 High Wych Primary School expects the highest standards of conduct from all employees, and will treat seriously any concern that an employee may have about illegal or improper conduct.

1.2 Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the Headteacher any serious impropriety or breach of procedure.

1.3 Employees who do not follow the steps identified in this procedure or other agreed internal procedures, and take their concerns to other outside sources (e.g. the press), may be subject to a formal disciplinary investigation.

1.4 This procedure has been introduced in consultation with the trade unions and professional associations.

2 What is the purpose of this procedure?

2.1 This procedure is designed to enable employees to notify the Headteacher (but see 4.1) of any reasonable suspicion of illegal or improper conduct. Where the concerns are about safeguarding children or young people, the school's Designated Senior Person for Child Protection should be notified (see 7 below).

2.2 It is a procedure in which the Headteacher will be expected to act swiftly and constructively in the investigation of any concerns in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.

2.3 Concern about a colleague's professional capability should not be dealt with using this procedure (but see section 7 below).

3 When Should It Be Used?

This procedure is not designed to replace or be used as an alternative to the

grievance procedure, which should be used where an employee is only aggrieved about his/her own situation.

Employees who are worried about wrong doing at work do not necessarily have a personal grievance.

3.2 Employees must act in good faith and must have reasonable grounds for believing the information to be accurate.

3.3 No employee who uses this procedure in good faith will be penalised for doing so. The school will not tolerate harassment and/or victimisation of any employee raising concerns.

3.4 An employee who is not sure whether the conduct he/she is concerned about does constitute illegal or improper conduct or is unsure about how to proceed can contact any of the names listed in section 8 for advice.

3.5 Financial regulations require any employee who suspects fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity to ensure this is reported to Internal Audit for possible investigation. Normally you must first report any suspicion of such an irregularity to the Headteacher (but see 4.1), who will in turn report it to Internal Audit. Similar principles apply to Academies where the funding agency must be informed.

4 Mechanism For Raising Concerns

4.1 Where the issue concerns your Headteacher or, having made your report, you believe he/she has failed to take appropriate action, then you should bring it to the attention of the Chair of Governors.

- Employees who feel unable to follow this route, for whatever reason, have the option of contacting one of the names listed in section 8.

4.3 Depending on the nature of the concern the complainant will be asked to justify and support their claim. Normally the complainant will be asked to do this in writing. It will, therefore, be helpful to note down any facts and dates as they happen.

4.4 Employees who want to use the procedure but feel uneasy about it may wish to consult their trade union initially and bring a friend or trade union representative along to any discussions, so long as the third party is independent of the issue.

4.5 Where anonymity is requested efforts will be made to meet the request where appropriate but that might not always be possible. The earlier and more open the expression of concern the easier it will be to take appropriate action.

4.6 Each case will be investigated thoroughly with the aim of informing the complainant of the outcome of any investigation as quickly as possible.

5 What Should Be Done If An Issue Is Raised With A Member Of Staff?

5.1 If a member of staff (other than the Headteacher) is approached by a colleague on a matter of concern as defined in this document, he/she should be advised to take the matter to the Headteacher (but see 4.1).

6 Examples Of Illegal And/Or Improper Conduct

- fraudulent or improper use of the school's money or assets
- dangerous practices at work
- corruptly receiving any gift or advantage, thus failing to comply with the Bribery Act 2010 (see Model Anti Bribery Policy for Schools available on the Grid).
- allowing private interests to override the interests of the school.

7 Safeguarding Children And Young People

7.1 All employees have a duty to report concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils/students

7.2 Concerns about any of the following should be reported to the school's Designated Senior Person for Child Protection (DSP):

- physical abuse of a pupil/student
- sexual abuse of a pupil/student
- emotional abuse of a pupil/student
- neglect of a pupil/student
- an intimate or improper relationship between an adult and a pupil/student

The school's DSP is Mrs M J West.

7.3 The reason for the concern may be the actions of a colleague (including a more senior colleague), a governor, another pupil/student or someone outside the school. Whatever the reason, concerns must be reported.