



# Whistleblowing Policy

## Hopewell School

<b>Policy Date:</b>	September 2023
<b>Date Ratified by Governors:</b>	September 2023
<b>Next Review:</b>	September 2024



## Introduction

At Hopewell School we are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and 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. This policy has been

written in conjunction with the guidance set out out by the Department for Education document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2022.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or relevant agencies. This procedure encourages staff to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within school rather than over-looking a problem or raising the matter outside.

It applies to all staff, agency workers and supply staff and those contractors working on the premises, for example, cleaners, builders and drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with Hopewell School.

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 and other statutory reporting 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, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely occur the result of which the school fails to comply with a legal obligation. For example, unauthorised use of school funds, possible fraud and corruption, verbal, sexual or physical abuse, or other unethical conduct discrimination of any kind and waste/frivolous expenditure
- disclosures related to past, current or likely miscarriages of justice
- past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- past, current or likely 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.
- 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 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 headteacher. If your concern is about the headteacher, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the LADO (local authority designated officer) or the Chair of Governors.
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – do NOT 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