



EDUCATION
and
LEADERSHIP
Trust



Levenshulme
HIGH SCHOOL

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

V1.7

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1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- 1.1 This policy outlines the Trust and Local Governing Bodies approach to employee disclosures on “whistleblowing”. The Trust is committed to providing a working environment to protect the health, safety and welfare of all its employees. The Trust is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and will not tolerate malpractice or wrong doing. It is therefore committed to a policy which seeks to protect individuals who make disclosures with regard to any instance of malpractice or wrong doing in the public interest.

2. AIMS

- Provide a channel and process for individual members of staff to raise genuine and legitimate concerns about incidents of misconduct or malpractice.
- Give a commitment that misconduct and malpractice is taken extremely seriously.
- Ensure confidentiality, to provide reassurance that employees who raise concerns in good faith can do so without fear of reprisals or victimisation.
- To provide guidance setting out arrangements and procedures for applying the policy.
- Allow the Academy Headteacher, working alongside the Executive Headteacher, to give guidance where appropriate or to appoint other appropriate agencies to conduct an investigation into those concerns on behalf of the Academy Headteacher/Local Governing Body or Trust and to take appropriate action to resolve the situation.

3. WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING

- 3.1 "Whistleblowing" is the term which has been adopted to describe arrangements which allow persons, usually employees, to express concerns about any types of malpractice which may be occurring in the work place. This could be something that is, or may be:
- ✓ Unlawful or a criminal offence
 - ✓ A breach of a legal obligation
 - ✓ In disregard of health and safety legislation
 - ✓ Against financial regulations
 - ✓ Improper conduct
 - ✓ Inappropriate or unauthorised use of schools funds
 - ✓ A deliberate cover up of information tending to show any of the above.
- Whistleblowing arrangements are closely linked to the creation of a culture which encourages employees to express their concerns without fear of intimidation or recrimination, and in the confident knowledge that any reported concerns will be treated seriously and in confidence, and will be fully investigated.
 - Whistleblowing arrangements allow for concerns to be expressed outside the normal line management structure, if necessary. One of the important aspects of Whistleblowing is that it enables employees to speak out in a situation where it is usually employees most closely involved with the particular service area who are most likely to know if malpractices are occurring.

- 3.2 Members of staff are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the school. However they may feel that expressing their concerns would be disloyal to their colleagues. It may be easier to ignore these concerns than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice. They may also fear harassment or victimisation.
- 3.3 The Trust therefore, will continue to encourage employees and others with serious concerns of misconduct or malpractice to come forward and voice those concerns. This policy makes it clear that members of staff can do so without fear of reprisals or victimisation.
- 3.4 Whistleblowing arrangements also recognise, however, that it is possible that allegations of wrongdoing may be false or malicious and the arrangements make clear that false allegations will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 4.1 The Academy Headteacher and Governors will do everything possible to protect an employee's identity when a concern is raised and where the individual does not want their name disclosed. It must be appreciated, however, that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement may be required as part of the evidence and/or an individual may be a possible witness in any future proceedings.

5. ANONYMOUS CONCERNS

- 5.1 All complaints will be considered/investigated but the level of investigation will depend upon the nature of the allegations; the seriousness of the issues raised; the credibility of the concern; and the likelihood of confirming the allegations from attributable sources.
- 5.2 Concerns expressed anonymously are much less persuasive than when an employee is prepared to come forward formally. It will not of course be possible to report any findings back to the complainant in these circumstances.

6. FALSE AND MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

- 6.1 While encouraging staff to bring forward matters of concern, the Academy Headteacher and Governors will guard against bogus claims made to deliberately damage the reputation of other staff at the school.
- 6.2 If a member of staff makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be considered or taken. However, if a member of staff makes false, malicious or vexatious allegations this will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and disciplinary action with outcomes including possible dismissal may be taken.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Staff Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to ensure that their own behaviour is appropriate to the school as a workplace and does not contribute to an environment in which malpractice or wrong doing is either ignored, condoned or encouraged. All staff should challenge such behaviour if it occurs, or bring it to the attention of a relevant person e.g. a line manager, member of the school's Senior Leadership Team, the Academy Headteacher or Executive Headteacher.
- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to whistleblow in a responsible manner in line with the policy, escalating matters to outside agencies where appropriate and necessary only if they are unable to find an internal audience or after having raised their concerns with the Governing Body if they do not feel they can be raised internally.
- In no circumstances should whistleblowing concerns be reported to the media, which can be a disciplinary offence with outcomes including possible dismissal.

7.2 HEADTEACHERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Headteachers have a duty which they share with others in leadership/managerial roles to establish and maintain a positive and accountable working environment. In particular, Academy Headteachers are responsible for:

- communicating the policy to all staff in such a way as to promote its understanding and making it easily accessible;
- managing staff in a professional and sensitive manner;
- ensuring that the school environment has a culture where malpractice and or wrong doing is unacceptable;
- ensuring that the policy is implemented effectively and efficiently at all levels throughout the school;
- taking all concerns raised seriously, ensuring the necessary action is taken to address the matter promptly, and as sensitively and confidentially as possible;
- ensuring that appropriate support is available to complainants during the investigation of their complaint; this may be via a colleague or trade union representative;
- making it clear that malicious and vexatious allegations are serious matters and will not be tolerated;
- ensuring that appropriate support is available to witnesses during the investigation of the complaint; this may be via a colleague or trade union representative.

7.3 TRUST BOARD AND LOCAL GOVERNING BODY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust Board and the Local Governing Body have the responsibility to:

- meet its legal duties and responsibilities and act at all times within the legal framework;
- have an up-to-date and comprehensive Whistleblowing policy;

- receive reports from the Academy Headteacher and Executive Headteacher on the application of the procedure;
- agree that the Chair of Governors be the contact for complaints made against the Academy Headteacher or in circumstances where a member of staff has concerns about the impartiality of the Academy Headteacher for any reason
- Agree that in the event of a complaint against the Chair, the vice chair will be the contact. The Complaints procedure should be used if appropriate, but the Whistleblowing Policy if not.

7.4. TRUST BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trust Board has the responsibility to agree that the Chair of the Trust Board be the contact for complaints made against the Executive Headteacher.

8. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

- 8.1 The Local Governing Body acknowledge that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult decision for a member of staff to take, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. The Academy Headteacher/Governors will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect any person who raises a concern in good faith.
- 8.2 The Academy Headteacher or relevant person will monitor how a member of staff is subsequently treated after raising a matter of concern and will ensure that if they find evidence of harassment or victimisation, this is dealt with under disciplinary arrangements.
- 8.3 Employees should raise their concerns with their immediate line manager if possible. However, the most appropriate person to contact to report a concern will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice.
- 8.4 Where the individual believes that their manager is involved in the matter of concern, they should then contact the Academy Headteacher (or the Chair of the Local Governing Body if the concern raised is related to the Academy Headteacher) or if the member of staff has a compelling reason to believe that the Academy Headteacher will not be willing or able to address the matter, to the Executive Headteacher.
- 8.5 Wherever possible, concerns should be expressed in writing, setting out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why the member of staff is particularly concerned about the situation.
- 8.6 If a member of staff does not feel able to put the concern in writing initially, he or she should be allowed to telephone or meet the appropriate person who will make a note of the concerns.
- 8.7 The member of staff will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for concern to enable the matter to be taken forward.
- 8.9 In the event both the Academy Headteacher **and** the Chair of Governors are the subject of the concerns the complaint must be made in writing to the Trust Board.

8.10 if the concern involves the Executive Headteacher, the Whistleblowing Policy or the Trust's complaints procedure should be used.

9. HOW THE MATTER WILL BE INVESTIGATED - INFORMAL STAGE

- 9.1 Allegations will be handled confidentially and discreetly by all who are directly involved in the investigating process.
- 9.2 Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take including who should undertake the investigation. In some cases an investigation may be completed without the subject of the complaint being aware of the investigation.
- 9.3 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action, without the need for investigation. In these cases confirmation should be sought from the employee that they are satisfied that the matter is resolved. This does not preclude matters being raised in the future if further concerns arise.
- 9.4 If it is determined that the concerns or allegations fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example disciplinary procedures) it should normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Before any further investigatory action is taken the Academy Headteacher should consult with the HR provider.
- 9.5 If it is determined that the matter should be dealt with formally, the Academy Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if appropriate) should notify the HR provider, before any action is taken.
- 9.6 To assist the nominated person's investigation you will find at Appendix 1 a "Record Sheet" to record progress.
- 9.7 Those who have made the complaint will be informed if further action is being taken or not, but may not be given specific information about the outcome if it is confidential or sensitive.

10. FORMAL STAGE

- 10.1 The member of staff expressing concern will receive a written acknowledgement within 10 working days of the concern being received. This acknowledgement may indicate:
- how it is proposed to deal with the matter
 - an estimate of how long it will take to provide a response
 - any initial enquiries which may have been made
 - Whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.
- 10.2 Having acknowledged receipt of the concern raised, the Academy Headteacher or (Chair of Governors in the case of the Academy Headteacher) will consult with the HR provider if assistance is required with the investigation. For school purchasing the Management Support, One Education SLA, such investigations could be conducted on behalf of the Academy Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

NB. If urgent action is required in response to a concern this may be taken before a full investigation is conducted.

- 10.3 If necessary, further information will be sought from the member of staff at the outset. This will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved in conducting an investigation and the clarity of the information provided.
- 10.4 At any meeting arranged to discuss the member of staff's concerns they may if they so wish, be accompanied by a representative or a companion who is not involved in the area to which the concern relates.
- 10.5 Investigation procedures into allegations of malpractice must be independent, skilled and objective. The Investigating Officer appointed must therefore not have had any previous involvement with the case and will be sensitive to the wishes of the complainant wherever possible.
- 10.6 Where a complaint involves the Academy Headteacher, then the Governing Body will have the discretion to appoint any external Investigation Officer as they think fit, subject only to the requirement that the person is not employed by the school. In any event, investigating officers must be at an appropriate level of seniority and must have sufficient experience and/or training to allow a thorough investigation to take place. Depending upon the circumstances, external agencies may also be involved in the investigation.
- 10.7 The investigation should normally be completed within 30 working days of the complaint being registered. Where cases prove to be more complicated and it may not be possible to complete within the time scale, it will need to be extended to accommodate the particular circumstances. Where the timescale will probably exceed 30 working days, the investigating officer will advise the complainant.
- 10.8 During the investigation every effort will be made to protect the legitimate rights of all parties involved. In particular the following principles shall be adhered to:
- Strict confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Any breach of confidentiality may lead to consideration of disciplinary action;
 - Throughout the investigation process, the complainant, the alleged perpetrator and any others interviewed are entitled to be accompanied by either a companion or professional association/trade union representative.
- 10.9 The first step in the investigation to be taken by an Investigating Officer will be to speak to the complainant and then to the alleged perpetrator. Witnesses may be interviewed as part of the investigation and asked to provide a written statement. Where witnesses have been identified by the complainant, and particularly where witnesses are interviewed, it is important that the witnesses do not suffer any personal detriment as a result, providing that they have acted in good faith.

11. OUTCOME OF THE INVESTIGATION

- 11.1 The investigation will conclude with a report by the Investigating Officer to the Academy Headteacher, Chair of Local Governing Body or other relevant person. This will summarise the Investigating Officer's findings on the allegations and recommend further action which could include:
- a finding that the allegation was unfounded and therefore no action needs to be taken;

- a recommendation to take no further action on the complaint. This will be appropriate if the Investigating Officer decides that there is a lack of evidence relating to the complaint or that the complaint is untrue;
- a recommendation to take action in order to deal with the matter on the basis that it is not sufficiently serious to warrant formal disciplinary action. Such action could include:
 - written management advice; and/or
 - an instruction to the member of staff to undertake appropriate guidance and/or training; and/or
 - appropriate changes in working arrangements which must not be to the disadvantage of the complainant;
- a recommendation to initiate formal disciplinary action because there is objective evidence to support the allegation that malpractice has taken place.

11.2 The Academy Headteacher/relevant person (Chair of Local Governing Body in the case of an Academy Headteacher) will write to the complainant and the alleged perpetrator detailing the findings of the investigation and the action to be taken. This letter will contain an undertaking that the complainant and any witnesses will not be victimised or suffer any detriment as a result of having made the complaint.

11.3 Where an Academy Headteacher/relevant person determines to take no action irrespective of the recommendation made he/she shall give written reasons for this determination to the complainant (and the alleged perpetrator). Failure to give such information will be regarded as a breach of this procedure.

11.4 Where the Investigating Officer considers that a complaint is untrue and malicious he/she will recommend a second investigation of the circumstances. This may lead to consideration of disciplinary action against the complainant. Suspension may be considered necessary but should be seen as a neutral act which does not of itself imply that any pre-emptive judgement has been reached.

11.5 The Academy Headteacher (or Chair of the Local Governing Body in the case of the Academy Headteacher) should maintain a confidential central record for a period of five years (seven years for allegations of financial irregularities). A copy should be held by the Trust Board, of all Whistleblowing allegations which have been raised and the responses provided.

11.6 In respect of anonymous allegations, should an Academy Headteacher or Chair of Local Governing Body consider that further action would be inappropriate details of the allegation and reason for the decision must still be recorded. These central records will be used to analyse the impact and effectiveness of the arrangements put in place as part of the process of reporting back to members on the effectiveness and outcomes of the Policy and as a record of actions taken in the case of any matters raised under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

12. HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

12.1 It is intended that the Whistle-blowing Policy and these procedures will enable the Trust Board to satisfactorily deal with concerns raised by employees. If an employee is not

satisfied, and feels it appropriate to take the issue further, the employee may make a protected disclosure to a third party, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. There is an independent charity "Public Concern at Work" (telephone 020 7404 6609; helpline@pcaw.org.uk) which provides free advice to employees wishing to express concerns about fraud or other serious malpractices.

- 12.2 The Local Governing Body and Trust Board should make every effort to ensure that a satisfactory conclusion is reached to minimise the cases where the employee feels they must resort to these measures.

**WHALLEY RANGE 11-18 HIGH SCHOOL
WHISTLEBLOWING RECORD SHEET**

Please print out this document and fill it in

Date concern/allegation received.	
Name of employee making complaint/allegation (unless anonymous).	
Nature of concern/allegation raised.	
Date acknowledgement provided to employee (within 10 working days).	
School nominated person responsible for undertaking investigation.	
People to be interviewed, including dates of any interviews	
Outcome of investigation.	
Date notification of outcome given to employee.	

13.

**LEVENSHULME HIGH SCHOOL
WHISTLEBLOWING RECORD SHEET**

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Date acknowledgement provided to employee (within 10 working days).	
School nominated person responsible for undertaking investigation.	
People to be interviewed, including dates of any interviews.	
Outcome of investigation.	
Date notification of outcome given to employee.	

SUMMARY OF CONTACTS - LHS

1. Your line manager

2. Member of SLT responsible for your Faculty or department

<i>SLT Lead</i>	<i>Faculty/Dept.</i>	<i>Contact Details</i>
Sarah Gregory	Science Computing & Business Design and Technologies	sgregory@levenshulmehigh.co.uk
Donna Johnson	Inclusion P.E.	djohnson@levenshulmehigh.co.uk
Neil Johnson	Maths English	njohnson@levenshulmehigh.co.uk
Tom Norton	Humanities	tnorton@levenshulmehigh.co.uk
Jo Walker	Languages	jwalker@levenshulmehigh.co.uk
Business Manager	All Support departments	mmcnulty@levenshulme.co.uk

3. Any member of SLT (see contact details above)

4. Academy Headteacher

Dr Jo MacKinnon jmackinnon@levenshulmehigh.co.uk

5. Executive Headteacher

Ms Patsy Kane MA pkane@levenshulmehigh.co.uk

6. Chair Of Local Governing Body

Dr Chris Turner cturner@levenshulmehigh.co.uk

Or via post to school or pigeonhole in Head's PA's office

7. Chair of Trust Board

Mike Chidley mike.chidsteel@virgin.net

SUMMARY OF CONTACTS - WRHS

1. Your line manager

2. Member of SLT responsible for your Faculty or department

<i>SLT Lead</i>	<i>Faculty/Dept.</i>	<i>Contact Details</i> <i>0161 861 9727 or emails below</i>
Jackie Fahey	PE Inclusion	jfahey@wrhs1118.co.uk
Jane Barnes	DCP Digital and Business Technologies	jbarnes@wrhs1118.co.uk
Debbie Collier	All Support departments	dcollier@wrhs1118.co.uk
Liz Hole		ehole@wrhs1118.co.uk
Sofia Zarar	Inclusion	szarar@wrhs1118.co.uk
Emma Lashley	Maths English	elashley@wrhs1118.co.uk
Julie Lomax	Sixth Form Social Science	jlomax@wrhs1118.co.uk
Letitia Schenk	World Languages	lschenk@wrhs1118.co.uk
Kate Wragg	E-learning and IT infrastructure Global Awareness	cwragg@wrhs1118.co.uk
Mike Lea	Science	mlea@wrhs1118.co.uk
Morresa Connolly	Heads of House	mconnolly@wrhs1118.co.uk

3. Any member of SLT (see contact details above)

4. Academy Headteacher

Liz Hole: ehole@wrhs1118.co.uk 0161 861 9727

5. Executive Headteacher Patsy Kane pkane@wrhs1118.co.uk

6. Chair Of Local Governing Body and Trust Board

Mike Chidley mike.chidsteel@virgin.net

Or via post to school or pigeonhole in Head's PA's office