Heath House Prep School

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Introduction

Whilst we expect all our colleagues, both internal and external, to be professional at all times and hold the welfare and safety of every child as their paramount objective, there may be occasions where this may not be happening.

This policy sets out the school's procedure for whistleblowing and has regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026) (KCSIE), Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026) and the Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended. It should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct Policy. The whistleblowing procedure forms an essential part of the school's induction arrangements for staff. Please also see the Safe Recruitment of Staff Policy and Staff Development and Training Policy.

Heath House is committed to maintaining an open and transparent culture in which staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements. All concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately. Staff should raise concerns at the earliest opportunity using the procedures set out in this policy.

Disclosure of information

Whistleblowing is the reporting by a worker of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to the school's activities where the disclosure is made in the public interest. A protected disclosure may concern one or more of the following:

- That a criminal offence has been committed or is being committed or is likely to be committed;
- That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they are subject;
- That a miscarriage of justice that has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur;
- That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be, endangered;
- That sexual harassment has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur;
- That the environment, has been, is being, or is likely to be, damaged;
- That information tending to show any of the above, is being, or is likely to be, deliberately concealed.

Disclosure procedure

- Where a concern relates to the safeguarding or welfare of a child, staff must act immediately and follow the school's Safeguarding Policy. This includes the procedures for concerns or allegations about adults working in or on behalf of the school.
- A whistleblowing concern should normally be raised promptly with the Head Teacher. Where the concern relates to the Head Teacher, or where the member of staff reasonably believes it would be inappropriate to raise the matter with the Head Teacher, the concern should be raised with the

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Assistant Head – Pastoral or another appropriate senior leader or representative of the proprietor. Where a member of staff feels unable to raise a safeguarding concern internally, or believes that a concern has not been addressed appropriately, they may use an appropriate external whistleblowing route.

- Workers who make a protected disclosure in accordance with the law are protected from being subjected to detriment as a result of making that disclosure. Employees are also protected from dismissal where the reason, or principal reason, for dismissal is that they have made a protected disclosure. The school will not tolerate victimisation, harassment or retaliation against anyone who raises a genuine concern under this policy;
- All concerns raised under this policy will be taken seriously and considered fairly and consistently. Where a person raising a concern requests confidentiality, the school will make every reasonable effort to protect their identity. Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to consider, investigate or respond to the concern, or where disclosure is required by law;
- Concerns may be raised anonymously. However, staff are encouraged to identify themselves where they feel able to do so, as anonymous concerns can be more difficult to investigate and may limit the school's ability to seek further information or provide feedback. Anonymous concerns will nevertheless be considered on the basis of the information available;
- Victimisation, harassment, retaliation against, or attempts to deter a person from raising a genuine concern under this policy will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.
- A person will not face disciplinary action simply because a concern raised in good faith proves to be mistaken or unfounded. However, knowingly making a false allegation or acting maliciously may be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures.

A personal complaint relating solely to an individual's own employment circumstances will not normally amount to whistleblowing unless the concern also satisfies the legal public-interest test. Personal employment grievances should normally be raised under the school's grievance procedure. Where a concern includes both personal and wider public-interest issues, the school will consider which procedure or procedures are appropriate.

Safeguarding Whistleblowing Concerns

Where a member of staff has concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice or potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements, these concerns should be raised through the procedures set out in this policy and the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Where a member of staff feels unable to raise a safeguarding concern internally, or feels that a genuine concern is not being addressed, whistleblowing channels may be used. Staff may contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Staff may also make a disclosure to an appropriate prescribed person or body where the legal requirements for doing so are met.

A worker may also make a protected disclosure to an appropriate prescribed person or body where the statutory requirements are met. The prescribed person must be relevant to the subject matter of the concern. Staff can consult the current Government list of prescribed persons and bodies or seek independent advice where they are unsure which external body is appropriate.

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Low-Level Concerns and Allegations about Adults

Concerns about the behaviour of an adult working in or on behalf of the school must be dealt with in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct. This includes concerns that meet the harm threshold and concerns that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns).

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt', that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, but which does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Staff must share low-level concerns in accordance with the procedures set out in the Safeguarding Policy. Where a member of staff believes that concerns about an adult are not being dealt with appropriately, or that there is poor or unsafe safeguarding practice, they may raise the matter under this Whistleblowing Policy.

Please also see the Safeguarding Policy.

Internal use only

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