



Glendower Preparatory School

Whistleblowing Policy

2024-2025

Reviewed: March 2024

Next review: March 2025

1 WHISTLEBLOWING

What Is Whistleblowing?

A 'whistleblower' is someone who discovers something that is wrong and alerts his employer or the relevant authorities to what is going on. The law protects whistleblowers from their employer subjecting them to detriment or dismissal by reason of their having "blown the whistle" and from detrimental treatment by their colleagues. To be protected by the law, the act of whistleblowing must fall within the legal rules and the whistleblower must reasonably believe that their disclosure of wrongdoing is made in the public interest.

This school promotes a culture of safety and raising concerns. We value our staff and pupils and wish to encourage reflective practice. We encourage all staff and volunteers to feel able to raise concerns about poor and unsafe practice and potential failures in our school's safeguarding regime and undertake that such concerns will be taken seriously by the Senior Leadership Team. We recognise the importance of transparency and accountability in relation to how concerns are received and handled. No employee will suffer the detriment for speaking up if they believe that something is wrong. A "whistleblower" is someone who discovers something that is wrong and alerts his/her employer or the relevant authorities to what is going on. The law protects whistleblowers from their employer subjecting them to detriment or dismissal by reason of their having "blown the whistle" and from detrimental treatment by their colleagues. The school has further information on the whistleblowing policy contained in our Employee Handbook, issued to staff at the time of their induction upon their employment with the school. The Whistleblowing Policy gives staff clear guidance and procedures for reporting and handling concerns, including about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime and provision for mediation and dispute resolution where necessary. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the school or feels that their concerns are genuinely not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them. General guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing> or they can use the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (Tel: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00am-8:00pm, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk).

Aims

- To assist staff to acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of Senior Leadership and/or relevant external agencies, particularly where the welfare of children may be at risk
- To enable and encourage individuals to raise genuine and legitimate concerns
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases
- To support staff to take an active role in the elimination of poor or insufficient practices, malpractice or wrongdoing

PROCEDURES

Having observed something that gives cause for serious concern, (this may be to do with safeguarding, welfare, financial malpractice, Health and Safety, illegality, unauthorised breach of confidentiality etc) the following action should be taken;

- Report your concern to the Head. If your concern is about the Head, report to the Chair of Governors
- If you are concerned about how to raise a concern, you should seek advice through an external agency (eg: your union, EYFS advisor, professional body, or call the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline on 0800 0280285 . The independent whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work also operates a confidential helpline on 020 3117 2520.)
- Record what you witnessed in writing, including any possible background names, other witnesses, dates, times and places, as well as the full nature of your concern. If for any reason you do not wish to put your concern in writing, the person whom you report will be asked to make a written record and the school will ask you to sign to confirm its accuracy. Keep a copy of the written record.
- Do not:
 - Investigate the matter yourself
 - Tell those you suspect to be involved
 - Accuse or approach individuals
 - Tell anyone other than the Head or Chair of Governors (if your concern is about the Head)
- You will receive written acknowledgement of your concern within one week of its receipt
- The Head will investigate your concern. You will be informed of what action is being taken within two weeks of your original report. You will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and the outcome
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you should take your concern to the Department for Education or your union if you have one.

IF YOUR CONCERN IS ABOUT AN IMMEDIATE OR CURRENT RISK TO A CHILD/CHILDREN, YOU MUST FOLLOW THE PROCEDURES LAID OUT IN THE SCHOOL'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY.

In the case of suspected serious harm, the police may be informed at the outset.

If a concern is raised confidentially, it is very difficult to investigate. The Head will respect and maintain a person's identity when a concern is raised. However, in certain circumstances, identities will have to be revealed to the person complained about and the complainant may be asked to provide written evidence in support of the complaint. If a person's identity is to be disclosed, he or she will be informed before the disclosure and given the reasons as to why this will be necessary.

The school's disciplinary procedures can be found in the Employee Handbook, and this will be applied during the investigation stages and outcome decision of the concern. This policy is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain standards of conduct, attendance and job performance. This procedure applies to all employees.

Any employee who criticises, bullies or victimises a fellow employee by reason of their whistleblowing will be liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, depending on the seriousness of the conduct.

Self- reporting:

We recognise that staff may experience difficulties, such as physical or mental ill health or personal problems which could impinge on their professional competence. Staff should report such difficulties to a member of SLT so that professional and personal support can be offered. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where the difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children and young people.