



HAILEY HALL SCHOOL
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WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

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Responsible Committee: Finance & Premises

Responsible Person: Business Manager & Business Officer

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1. Introduction

The aim of this Policy is to encourage employees, and others, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the School to voice those concerns and feel secure in doing so.

It is important that any fraud, misconduct, or wrongdoing, is reported and properly dealt with. The School encourages all individuals to raise any concerns they may have about the conduct of others, or the way in which the School is run.

The School is committed to the principles of honesty and integrity. A culture of openness and accountability is critical to ensuring these values are authentically lived by.

This policy applies to all employees, workers, agency staff, contractors, service providers, volunteers, and trustees of the School.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

2. Scope

If your concern relates to how you have been treated, this should be raised under the grievance or bullying and harassment policies.

The whistleblowing policy will not replace any existing policies or procedures. If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this policy the School's disciplinary policy will be used.

The School encourages individuals to disclose any concerns they may have regardless of whether they are covered by this or another policy.

3. Legislation

The requirement to have clear whistleblowing procedures in place set out in the [Academy Trust Handbook](#).

This policy has been written in line with the above document, as well as [government guidance on whistleblowing](#). We also take into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#).

4. What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing means the reporting of information which relates to actual or suspected wrongdoing related to a "qualifying disclosure".

Qualifying disclosures are disclosures of information where the worker reasonably believes (and it is in the public interest) that one or more of the following matters is either happening, has taken place, or is likely to happen in the future.

- A criminal offence
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of any individual
- An act causing damage to the environment
- A breach of a legal obligation
- A deliberate attempt to conceal any of the above

If a worker is going to make a disclosure it should be made to the employer first, or if they feel unable to use the school's procedure the disclosure should be made to a prescribed person, so that employment rights are protected.

It is not necessary for a whistleblower to have proof of such an act for the protections of this policy to apply.

Potential whistleblowers are encouraged to seek support from a senior manager or their trade union representative if they are unsure whether to make a disclosure or to access support in making a disclosure, regardless of whether it is qualifying or not.

5. Protection for whistleblowers

This policy has been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act (Prescribed persons) Order 2014 and other relevant legislations, which protects workers making disclosures.

A whistleblower who makes a qualifying disclosure has the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any detriment, or victimised, because they have made a disclosure.

Victimisation of a whistleblower for raising a qualifying disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.

The School will not dismiss anyone on the basis that they have made an appropriate lawful disclosure in accordance with the law and this policy.

Whistleblowers may seek support and advice from organisations such as the whistleblowing charity Protect (<https://protect-advice.org.uk> / 020 3117 2520) or ACAS (www.acas.org.uk).

6. Obligations for the whistleblower

An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is, in itself, a disciplinary offence. A whistleblower who is told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority, should not agree to remain silent.

Whistleblowing to an external agency without first using the procedure below may be considered a breach of the School's Code of Conduct.

It is not appropriate to whistleblow to the media in any circumstances and may be considered gross misconduct.

Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.

7. Confidentiality

The School encourages individuals to voice their concerns openly. If anyone wishes to raise concerns confidentially, the School will make every effort to keep their identity secret.

The person(s) to whom the disclosure is made will consult with the whistleblower before divulging their identity to any party, including an investigator.

The School does not encourage anonymous disclosures as this may make it harder to establish the credibility of an allegation and may make investigation difficult or impossible. Anonymous concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as far as is possible under this policy.

8. Malicious or vexatious allegations

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns when they believe there is potentially an issue. If an allegation is made in good faith, but the investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the trust will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

9. The School's commitment

Any matter raised under this policy and procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially.

Whilst the person carrying out the investigation will aim to keep the whistleblower informed of the progress of the investigation and likely timescales, sometimes the requirement for confidentiality will prevent full information about the investigation, and any consequential disciplinary action, from being disclosed.

10. Obligations for the Board of Trustees

An appropriate representative of the School (Headteacher or named trustee) will inform Hertfordshire County Council, as the maintaining authority, of any qualifying disclosure at the earliest opportunity.

Concerns regarding financial irregularity will be reported to the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS); where concerns relate to child protection, these will be handled in keeping with the relevant policy of the School and reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the threshold is met.

11. Whistleblowing reporting stages

11.1 Stage 1 – Disclosure

The whistleblower should initially raise their concern to their line manager. They may do this orally or in writing. The line manager should inform the Headteacher of the concern.

If the concern relates to the line manager or any person to whom they report, (other than the Headteacher) the whistleblower should raise the issue with the Headteacher.

If the concern relates to the Headteacher, the whistleblower should raise this with the Trustee named at the end of this policy.

11.2 Stage 2 – Investigation

The School will arrange an investigation into the concerns raised. This will take place as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The investigation may involve the whistleblower and other individuals involved meeting with the investigator and giving a written statement.

At any investigatory meetings the whistleblower is entitled to be accompanied by a recognised trade union representative or a work colleague.

11.3 Step 3 – Report to Trustees

The investigator will report to the named representative of the Board of Trustees before any further action is taken. The representative of the Board of Trustees will decide on potential outcomes including, but not limited to:

- invoking the School's disciplinary process, or other relevant policy
- referral to the police, Hertfordshire County Council department, government department or regulatory agency
- no further action.

On conclusion of any investigation, the whistleblower will, as far as is practicable and where it is reasonable to do so, be told the outcome of the investigation and what the School has done, or proposes to do, about it. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

11.4 Step 4 – Escalation

If, on conclusion of stages 1, 2 and 3, the whistleblower believes that the appropriate action has not been taken, they should report the matter to the proper authority. The legislation sets out a number of bodies to which qualifying disclosures may be made. These include:

- the Financial Conduct Authority (formerly the Financial Services Authority)
- the Health and Safety Executive
- the Environment Agency
- Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Children's services and skills
- the Secretary of State for Education
- the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation.

A full list can be obtained from the charity, Protect or the BEIS (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) website. Alternatively, an employee may contact their professional association or trade union representative for guidance.

12. Data Protection

When an individual makes a disclosure, the school will process any personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the report is held securely and

accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

13. Contacts

The School's appointed member(s) of staff for this purpose is:

Mr Paul Delamaine

The School's appointed Trustee(s) for this purpose is:

Mr Richard Parperis

Or the independent whistleblowing charity **Protect**

Helpline [020 3117 2520](tel:02031172520)

E-mail: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk