Lady Margaret School

Whistleblowing Policy

Adopted: 8th March 2021
Review date: Spring 2024

Policy Statement

1.1. The School at all times conducts its business with the highest standards of integrity and honesty. It expects all employees to maintain the same standards in everything they do. Staff members are, therefore, encouraged to report any wrongdoing by the School or its members of staff that falls short of these business principles and any wrongdoing by staff that may cause harm or danger to the welfare of the School's pupils.

1.2. The School is committed to creating a climate of trust and openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved.

1.3. The aims of this policy are:

1.3.1. To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.

1.3.2. To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.

1.3.3. To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

1.4. This policy takes into account the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects employees who report wrongdoing within the workplace.

What is whistleblowing?

1.5. Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

1.5.1. criminal activity;

1.5.2. miscarriages of justice;

1.5.3. danger to health and safety;

1.5.4. damage to the environment;

1.5.5. failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;

1.5.6. financial fraud or mismanagement;
1.5.7. negligence;
1.5.8. any risk to the welfare of the School's pupils; or
1.5.9. the specific concealment of any of the above.

1.6 Examples of the above might include manipulation of accounting records and finances, inappropriate use of school assets or funds, decision-making for personal gain, any criminal activity, abuse of position, fraud and deceit, serious breaches of school procedures (such as failing to register a personal interest), or tampering with tender documentation.

1.7 A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have any of the above concerns, you should report them under this policy.

1.8 This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way in which you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should refer to the School's separate Grievance Procedure.

Procedure

1.9. The School encourages staff to raise any concerns internally in the first instance, as set out below. This is to allow those School staff and Governors in positions of responsibility and authority to right the wrong and to give any necessary explanations.

1.10. If appropriate, you should discuss the matter with your line manager in the first instance. If the matter requires further investigation such investigation will be carried out and you will be informed of the outcome of the investigations and what, if any, action has been taken.

1.11. If it is not appropriate to talk to your line manager or you remain unhappy about the speed or conduct of the investigation or the way in which the matter has been resolved by your line manager, you should refer the matter to the Headteacher. A meeting will be arranged as soon as possible to discuss your concerns. An investigation into the concerns will be carried out. When the Headteacher (or another appropriate person) has investigated your complaint, the Headteacher will tell you the result of the investigation and what, if any, action has been taken.

1.12. If your concern relates to potential financial fraud or mismanagement or harm to the welfare of the School's pupils, or if for any reason it is not appropriate to refer your concerns to the Headteacher, you may refer your concerns directly to any of the School contacts set out at the end of this policy.

1.13. You may raise your concerns in person, by telephone or in written form marked 'private and confidential' and addressed to one of the above-named individuals (whose contact details are set out at the end of this policy).

1.14. It may at any stage be necessary to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example, it may be necessary to involve other members of the School's staff, London Diocesan Board for Schools, legal or personnel advisers, the police, the Department for Education, the Local Authority, and/or child protection services. Where this is necessary the School reserves the right to make such a referral without your consent.

External disclosures

1.15. The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

1.16. The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely if ever be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

Protection and support for whistleblowers

1.17. Any member of staff who raises a concern under this procedure must not be subjected to any detrimental treatment as a result. In the event that you believe you are being subjected to a detriment by any person within the School as a result of your decision to invoke the procedure you must inform the assisting person immediately and appropriate action will be taken to protect you from any reprisals. Detrimental treatment could include dismissal, disciplinary action, threats and any other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern.

1.18. Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action.

1.19. As mentioned above, the independent whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work, operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

Raising unfounded malicious concerns

1.20. If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

Contact details

Contact	**Contact details**
Chair of Governors (Arabella MacIntyre)	arabellamacintyre@yahoo.co.uk
Headteacher (Elisabeth Stevenson)	estevenson@ladymargaret.lbhf.sch.uk
Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee (Justin Bairamian)	wgainham@ladymargaret.lbhf.sch.uk
Chair of the Staffing & General Purposes Committee (William Hunter)	williamqhunter@gmail.com

London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS)	London Diocesan Board for Schools London Diocesan House 36 Causton Street SW1P 4AU 0207 932 1100
Protect	Protect The Green House 244-254 Cambridge Heath Road London E2 9DA Email: info@protect-advice.org.uk Advice Line: 020 3117 2520