

Merchant Taylors' School

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

- 1 **Honesty and integrity:** The School is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards in accordance with the Code of Conduct. All organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.
- 2 **Aims:** The aims of this policy are to:
 - 2.1 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;
 - 2.2 provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns; and
 - 2.3 reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 3 **Staff:** This policy covers all employees, officers, governors, consultants, contractors, volunteers, work placement students, casual workers and agency workers.

Wrongdoing at work

- 4 **Whistleblowing:** Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:
 - 4.1 criminal activity;
 - 4.2 safeguarding concerns (see paragraph 9 below);
 - 4.3 failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
 - 4.4 miscarriages of justice;
 - 4.5 danger to health and safety;
 - 4.6 damage to the environment;
 - 4.7 bribery;
 - 4.8

- 6 **Grievances:** This procedure should not be used where you have a complaint relating to your personal circumstances in the workplace. The grievance procedure contained in the Employment Manual should be used in such cases.
- 7 **Detriment:** Provided that this procedure is used appropriately and correctly, you will not suffer any detriment as a result of reporting a suspected wrongdoing.
- 8 **Advice:** If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from the Bursar, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Protect, the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline or the Modern Slavery helpline.

Safeguarding

- 9 **Safeguarding:** Nothing within this policy is intended to prevent staff from complying with their statutory obligations in accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, September 2022). In particular:
 - 9.1 **Safeguarding / child protection policy:** If you have any concern about a pupil's welfare, action should be taken immediately. You should report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. See the School's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures for full information about what to do if you have a concern about a pupil, including what to do if the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available
 - 9.2 **Safeguarding - member of staff:** You should raise any concerns about another staff member with the Head Master, or if the concern is about the Head Master, with the Chair of Governors (without first notifying the Head Master) in accordance with the School's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures.
 - 9.3 **Whistleblowing policy:** You should follow this procedure to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice

- Failure to comply with exam regulations as set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and its awarding bodies
- A security breach of the examination paper
- Conduct of centre staff which undermines the integrity of the examination
- Unfair treatment of candidates by either giving an advantage to a candidate/group of candidates (e.g. by permitting a candidate an access arrangement which is not supported by appropriate evidence), or disadvantaging candidates by not providing access to the appropriate conditions (providing a ‘level playing field’)
- Possible fraud and corruption (e.g. accessing the exam paper prior to the exam to aid teaching and learning)
- Abuse of authority (e.g. the head of centre/members of the senior leadership team overriding JCQ and awarding body regulations)
- Other conduct which may be interpreted as malpractice/maladministration

With cases of centre malpractice, you may choose to use the stages mentioned below or you may choose to contact the awarding body or JCQ directly. If you do this, you will need the following information in order for them to investigate:

- The qualifications and subjects involved
- The centre involved
- The names of staff/candidates involved
- The regulations breached/specific nature of suspected malpractice
- When and where the suspected malpractice occurred
- Whether multiple examination series are affected
- If the issue has been reported to the centre and what the outcome was
- How the issue became apparent

Stage one

- 14 **Procedure:** You should disclose the suspected wrongdoing first to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. In the event that the member of the Senior Leadership Team is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you shall be entitled to proceed directly to Stage Two of this procedure.
- 15 **Response:** You can expect a response detailing to whom the disclosure has been notified or any action taken within seven days of the member of the Senior Leadership Team becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage two

- 16 **Procedure:** If no response is forthcoming after this seven day period, or if you are not satisfied with the way in which your concern has been handled or if the member of the Senior Leadership team is involved in the suspected wrongdoing you should notify the Head Master or Bursar, as appropriate.
- 17 **Response:** You can expect a response detailing any action taken within seven days of the Head Master or Bursar becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage three

- 18 **Procedure:** If no such response is forthcoming after seven days from the Head Master or Bursar, if you are not satisfied with the way in which your concern has been handled or if the Head Master or Bursar is involved in the suspected wrongdoing you should inform the Chair of Governors of the disclosure.

Relevant external reporting

- 19 **Outside body:** The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. The law recognises, as does paragraph 9 above, that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to a relevant outside body including:

- 19.1 the local authority's Designated Officer;
- 19.2 Children's Social Care;
- 19.3 the NSPCC;
- 19.4 the Health and Safety Executive;
- 19.5 the Environment Agency;
- 19.6 the Information Commissioner;
- 19.7 the Department for Education;
- 19.8 the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy;
- 19.9 the Police;
- 19.10 the Charity Commission;
- 19.11 the Independent Schools Inspectorate;
- 19.12 the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (**Ofsted**);
- 19.13 the Channel Police Practitioner;
- 19.14 the JCQ or relevant awarding body.

- 20 **Advice:** Staff are strongly encouraged to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone external but before you do, as well as considering the internal help and support available which is identified above, please seek external advice from:

- 20.1 **Protect**