



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Last reviewed Sept 2023

Next review date Sept 2024

Person responsible for this policy JL

Introduction

This policy describes how employees, volunteers, contractors and governors can raise confidentially concerns about suspected malpractice within the school. This includes concerns about fraud, financial irregularities, corruption, bribery, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice, unethical conduct, failure to comply with legal obligations and failure to comply with the staff Code of Conduct.

This policy is separate from the school's policy regarding grievances. It should not be used to raise grievances about a personal employment situation.

1. Procedure for Raising a Concern

- a) It is expected that in most cases individuals will raise any concerns internally with the headteacher. If the concern relates to the headteacher it should be raised with the Chair of Governors. If a concern about a governor is raised it will be treated in the same way as any other concern.
- b) All concerns will be treated confidentially; the name of the person raising the concern will not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator of malpractice without their prior approval.
- c) Individuals may prefer to raise a concern orally, but are encouraged to express concerns in writing wherever possible.
- d) If there is evidence of criminal activity the Police will always be informed.
- e) The school views confidentiality as a two-way process and would expect concerns raised under this policy to remain confidential until there has been opportunity for investigation and/or resolution.
- f) Any concern raised will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and appropriate corrective action will be pursued. The member of staff making the allegation will be kept informed of progress and, whenever possible and subject to third party rights, will be informed of the resolution.
- g) If individuals are not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with they have a right to raise it in confidence with the Governing Body.

2. External Procedures

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where individuals may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body. This is when they reasonably believe that:

- exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- the school would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- they would be victimised by the school.

3. Malicious Accusations

False, malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

4. Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation

It is understandable that whistle-blowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. The school aims to encourage openness and will support those who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if

they turn out to be mistaken. Members of staff will not suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine and legitimate concern, providing that they do so in good faith and following these procedures. If an employee believes that they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the headteacher immediately. If the matter is not remedied, it may be raised formally using the school's Grievance Procedure. Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct may be subject to disciplinary action.

This Whistleblowing Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Droitwich Spa High School and Sixth Form Centre takes its responsibilities as a data controller and data processor seriously and are committed to using any personal data collected and held in accordance with the law. The schools policies, privacy notices and forms in relation to personal data are available for you to view on our web site at www.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk or by using the <https://website.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk/index.php/communications/information-management-and-data-protection/> The School's Data Protection Officer is the *Governance Manager* who can be contacted at Droitwich Spa High School and Sixth Form Centre, Briar Mill, Droitwich, WR9 0AA or by email at privacy@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk