



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

This Policy includes the EYFS, Junior School and Senior School

Aims

Moorland School has adopted this policy on whistleblowing to enable members of staff to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about safeguarding, fraud, malpractice, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice, bribery, and failure to comply with legal obligations or unethical conduct. The policy also provides, if necessary, for such concerns to be raised outside the School.

Elements of the Policy

- a. The School's policy on whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that the School:
- b. Will not tolerate malpractice;
- c. Respects the confidentiality of staff raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively;
- d. Will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate;
- e. Will invoke the School's disciplinary policy and procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations;
- f. Will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all members of staff.

Procedure

This procedure is separate from the School's adopted procedures regarding grievances. Employees should not use the whistleblowing procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation.

This procedure is to enable members of staff to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the School.

Malpractice is not easily defined; however, it includes allegations of fraud, financial irregularities, corruption, bribery, dishonesty, acting contrary to the staff code of ethics, criminal activities, or failing to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice, or creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment.

Confidentiality

Employees who wish to raise a concern under this procedure are entitled to have the matter treated confidentially and their name will not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator of malpractice without their prior approval.

It may be appropriate to preserve confidentiality that concerns are raised orally rather than in writing, although members of staff are encouraged to express their concern in writing wherever possible.

The Investigation

A member of staff will be at liberty to express their concern to the Headteacher, Designated Senior Person or their Deputy.

Where a safeguarding allegation or complaint is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the Headteacher, or in her absence to the Designated DSL, although please note that anyone may make a direct referral to LSCB or Police should they deem this to be appropriate. If the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation or concern, then you must immediately report this directly to LADO.

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.

A member of staff who is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with will have a right to raise it in confidence with the Proprietors.

All staff are required to report to the Headteacher, or the Executive Headteacher in the Headteacher's absence, any concern or allegations about School safeguarding practices (including concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failings in the School's safeguarding regime) or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. The latter may be dealt with in accordance with the School's Managing Allegations of Abuse against staff procedure. There will be no disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in good faith. Staff have the choice of which DSL to contact. Staff can also contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline: 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk.

Reasons for whistle-blowing:

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concern about acceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from whistle-blowing:

- Starting a chain of events that spirals beyond the individual's control.
- Fear of getting it wrong and the repercussion of this.
- Fear of damaging a colleague's career.
- Fear of resentment from other colleagues.
- Fear of not being believed or taken seriously.

External procedures

Where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff shall have a right of access to an appropriate external person/body.

It should be noted that under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where a member of staff may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the employee reasonably believes:

- (a) that exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- (b) that the School would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- (c) where they believe they would be victimised by the School;
- (d) where the Secretary of State has ordered it.

Malicious accusations

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

Protection from reprisal or victimisation

No member of the staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine and legitimate concern, providing that they do so in good faith and following the whistleblowing procedures.

Reviewed and updated by Mrs Deborah Frost, September 2022