



WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. It applies when the complainant has no vested interest but rather is an observer. It is not the same as making a complaint.

The term 'whistleblowing' is sometimes confused with the need to report safeguarding or professional concerns about another member of staff or adult in the school. Whistleblowing is about systemic or procedural failures and is not only confined to issues about staff conduct. (Andrew Halls, Safeguarding, November 2016)

Statement of Intent

Thomas's London Day Schools are committed to open and honest communication between all members of the community. To that end we nurture a culture in which employees, parents and volunteers feel safe to raise, without fear of reprisal, a concern they may have about misconduct or malpractice.

The well-being and safety of the children is our prime concern; it must take priority over any loyalty towards work colleagues.

All concerns raised in accordance with this Policy will be promptly investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

AIMS

- To assist staff to acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies, particularly where the welfare of children may be at risk
- To enable and encourage individuals to raise genuine and legitimate concerns.
- To support staff to take an active role in the elimination of poor or insufficient practices, malpractice or wrongdoing.
- To ensure any concerns raised are investigated appropriately and confidentially.
- To ensure protection to those making the complaint against any form of retaliation or victimisation, as long as the disclosure must, in the reasonable belief of the worker making the disclosure, be made in the public interest

This policy covers concerns that fall outside the scope of our Complaints Policy, Grievance Procedure and Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.

PROCEDURES

Having observed something that gives cause for serious concern (this may be to do with child's safeguarding or welfare, health and safety, financial malpractice, illegality, unauthorised breach of confidentiality...), the following action should be taken:

- Report your concern to the Head. If your concern is about the Head, report to the Principal.
- If you are worried about how to raise a concern, you should seek independent advice though e.g. your union, early years' advisor, professional body or call 'Protect' (formerly Public Concern at Work) advice line on 020 3117 2520 (email whistle@protect-advice.org.uk)
- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: Advice on Whistleblowing; and
 - the NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college.
Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- Record what you witnessed in writing including where possible any background, names, other witnesses, dates, times and places as well as the nature of your concern. If for any reason you do not wish to put your concern in writing, the person to whom you report will make a written record and ask you to sign to confirm its accuracy. Keep a copy of the written record.
- Do not:
 - investigate the matter yourself
 - tell those you suspect to be involved
 - accuse or approach individuals
 - tell anyone other than the Head or Principal
- You will receive a written acknowledgement of your concern within one week of its receipt.
- The Head or Principal will investigate your concern. You will be informed of what action is being taken within two weeks of the original report. You will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and of its outcome.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome you should take your concern to Ofsted. They can be contacted:
 - through a dedicated whistleblowing hotline – 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 6.00pm)
 - by email to the whistleblowing team – whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
 - by post – WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

NB If your concern is about an immediate or current risk to a child, you must follow the procedure laid out in our Safeguarding Policy.

Confidentiality

If a concern is raised anonymously it is very difficult to investigate.

The Heads and Principals will respect and protect a person's identity when a concern is raised. However, in certain circumstances identities will have to be revealed to the person complained against and the complainant may be asked to provide written evidence in support of the complaint.

If a person's identity is to be disclosed, he or she will be informed before the disclosure and given reasons why this was necessary.

This Policy applies to both the main schools and the Kindergarten.

REFERENCES

This policy has been informed by:

DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2020)

DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' (July 2018)

The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (April 2013)

The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)

See also: Complaints Policy, Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure, Grievance
 Procedure,
 Health & Safety Policy, Safeguarding Children and Child Protection
 Policy