

## Introduction

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the school including governors.

Training is provided on whistleblowing as part of the safeguarding and child protection training regularly provided by the school.

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

Members of staff must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern, including low-level concerns, to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult, this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

## About this Policy

The School is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity and expects all staff to maintain high standards. However, 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.

## Aim

The School's policy on whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that it:

- will not tolerate malpractice, prejudice or discrimination;
- encourages staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, as appropriate;
- encourages a culture of safety and of raising concerns;
- encourages a culture of valuing staff and of reflective practice;
- respects the confidentiality of staff raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively;
- will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate;
- will only invoke the School's disciplinary procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations.



• will not tolerate malpractice, prejudice or discrimination; • encourages staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, as appropriate; • encourages a culture of safety and of raising concerns; • encourages a culture of valuing staff and of reflective practice; • respects the confidentiality of staff raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively; • will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate; • will only invoke the School's disciplinary procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations. The policy seeks to reassure staff that they can raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisal, even if they turn out to be mistaken; and • will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all members of staff. This is a whole school policy which also applies to Page 2 of 3 the Early Years Foundation Stage and Boarding Version 4.3 - May 2023 Scope of this policy and procedure This procedure is separate from the School's adopted procedures regarding grievances. Individuals should not use the whistleblowing procedure to raise concerns relating to their own personal circumstances, such as the way they have been treated at work. In those cases, the School's Grievance Procedure Policy should be used, as appropriate. If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this procedure you should first seek advice from the Head or the Bursar. 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 conduct, 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 (negligence). A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to suspected malpractice within the School. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected malpractice affecting any of the School's activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this procedure. If staff and volunteers feel unable to raise an issue with the School or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may report their concerns to other whistleblowing channels, such as: • Protect, an independent whistleblowing charity, previously known as Public Concern at Work (helpline: 020 3117 2502, email: [whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk), website: [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)). • The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (tel: 0800 028 0285 or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)). Confidentiality We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this procedure. However, if you wish to raise a concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating the concern to know your identity, this will be discussed with you. If there is evidence of criminal activity then the Police will in all cases be informed. We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should discuss this with the Head or Bursar and appropriate measures can then be taken to



preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt you can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are set out above. Raising a whistleblowing concern We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with a member of the Senior Management Team. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. In some cases, they may refer the matter to the Head, Deputy or Bursar. However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your concern has not been addressed, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you are at liberty to raise a whistleblowing concern to the Head, Deputy or the Bursar directly. If you feel unable to approach the Head, the Deputy or the Bursar directly, then the Chair of Governors should be the first point of contact. A meeting will be arranged with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this procedure. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information as the concerns raised are investigated. This is a whole school policy which also applies to Page 3 of 3 the Early Years Foundation Stage and Boarding Version 4.3 - May 2023 Any concern raised will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and appropriate corrective action will be pursued. You will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. Whenever possible and subject to third party rights, you will be informed of the resolution. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential. If you are not satisfied that your concern is being properly dealt with, you will have a right to raise it in confidence with the Governing Body. Alternatively, you can follow the external procedure below. External Procedures The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in school. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. However, where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff shall have a right of access to an external person/body. This may include (depending on the subject matter of the disclosure) HMRC, the Audit Commission, the Health and Safety Executive and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the disclosure relates to a child protection issue. It will very rarely, if ever, be appropriate for you to alert the media. 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 individual reasonably believes :-

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

We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect (see above), operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Malicious Accusations False, malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be



dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedure. Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. No member of 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. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Head, Deputy or Bursar immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you may raise it formally using the School's Grievance Procedure. You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action. This Whistleblowing Policy should be read in conjunction with the following: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Health and Safety Policy Code of Conduct for Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure Grievance Policy and Procedure "Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges'

1. ***Wrongdoing at work:*** This procedure is designed to allow any wrongdoing at the School to be brought to the attention of the appropriate person and rectified. It is available to all employees who discover something they feel they should pass on. All types of wrongdoing are included whether they are acts committed by fellow employees, faults in School procedures or oversights which should be rectified. The procedure should be used even in the event that the act or omission causing you concern has finished or has not yet started.
2. ***Low Level Concern:*** Knightsbridge School promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

**What is a low level concern?** A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small and even if no more than a 'nagging doubt', that an adult may have acted in a manner inconsistent with the school's Code of Conduct or simply – even if not linked to a particular act or omission – a sense of unease as to the adult's behaviour particularly towards or around children. Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is

ultimately intended to enable abuse. It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the allegation/harm threshold, are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately.

**Sharing low-level concerns:**

Low-level concerns about a member of staff should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). Where a low-level concern is raised about the designated safeguarding lead, it should be shared with the head.

Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by a supply agency or a contractor to work in a school or college, that concern should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), and/or head, and recorded and shared with their employer.

**Recording low-level concern:**

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible. The record will be shared with HR who will check for any potential patterns of concerns. The information collected will help determine what further action may need to be taken.

If a pattern of concern is identified a decision will be made on the appropriate course of action, this will be in line with the disciplinary and capability policy or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harm threshold will be referred to the LADO

3. **Grievances:** This procedure should not however be used where the information you have regarding a wrongdoing relates to a matter which could be raised as a grievance and it is your intention to raise the matter as a grievance. The Grievance Procedure should be used in such cases.
4. **Detriment:** Provided that this procedure is used correctly, you believe the truth of the facts you are reporting and that the matter is in the public interest you will not suffer any detriment as a result of reporting the wrongdoing. However, a failure in any of these regards may render the protection given to you by this procedure to be lost.

**Child Protection Concerns**

If you have concerns about another staff member then this should be referred to the Head or in her absence the Principal. Where there are concerns about the Head this should be referred to the Principal or in his absence the Proprietor without first notifying the Head. Where there are concerns about the Principal this should be referred to the Proprietor without first notifying either the Head or the Principal. If it is not possible to report concerns to the Head or the Principal in the circumstances above you should report any concerns directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in her absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. In any event, you may consider discussing any concerns with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and make any referral via them.

If you have concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime, you should raise these concerns with the Head or Principal.

If you feel unable to raise an issue with the school or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, you may use other whistleblowing channels including:

- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline :  
0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday  
Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).  
NSPCC, Weston House, 42 Curtain, Road, London EC2A 3NH
- Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills ("the Chief Inspector") about matters relating to the regulation and inspection of establishment and agencies for children's social care services.

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD  
Tel: 0300 123 3155  
Email: [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)

### *Examination Malpractice*

#### **Overview**

As an examination centre, Knightsbridge follows the recommendations of the Independent Commission into Malpractice (2018) and is committed to developing an ethical culture in which integrity in examinations and assessment is emphasised for both staff and students, in order to reduce the risk of malpractice. Such a culture of honesty and openness should enable staff and students to report matters of concern, as per the procedures laid out in this Whistleblowing Policy. Whistleblowing is encouraged, not penalised, and staff, parents or students should feel they have a duty to report any concerns they have about the conduct of

examinations.

For staff, the centre explains clearly what constitutes malpractice and unethical behaviour in examinations and non-examined assessments. For further information, please refer to 'KS Examination Policy 22.23'. For students who are undertaking, or who are about to undertake, their courses of study, we explain what constitutes malpractice and inform them of the regulations surrounding their assessments, as well as academic integrity more broadly. Parents can report concerns by getting in touch with the Head of Centre or Director of Learning. The Centre commits to working together with JCQ when investigating potential malpractice, including at an earlier stage than when it becomes a JCQ investigation, wherever possible and compliant with GDPR and competition law. All concerns will be fully investigated by appropriately trained and experienced individuals.

### **Reporting concerns**

Concerns should initially be raised with the Head of Centre or Director of Learning (DoL). It will then follow the procedure outlined in 'other concerns' below. If this doesn't resolve the matter, or the Head of Centre or DoL is believed to be involved, it should be reported to the awarding body (as per stage 4 in reporting 'other concerns.')

### **Anonymity**

As a Centre, we do everything reasonable to protect the reporter's identity, if requested. Members of staff who wish to report suspected malpractice at a centre where they work are protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA). More guidance on this is available from the JCQ website. Members of the public are not protected by PIDA, but awarding bodies make every effort to protect a Whistleblower's identity if that is what they wish, unless they are legally obliged to release it.

### ***Other Concerns:***

#### ***Stage One***

4. ***Procedure:*** You should disclose the suspected wrongdoing first to an SMT member. In the event that an SMT member is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you shall be entitled to proceed directly to Stage Two of this procedure.
5. ***Response:*** You can expect a response detailing to whom the disclosure has been notified or any action taken within 7 days of the SMT member becoming aware of the disclosure.

#### ***Stage Two***

6. ***Procedure:*** If no response is forthcoming after 7 days or if the SMT member is

involved in the suspected wrongdoing you shall be entitled to notify the Head.

7. **Response:** You can expect a response detailing any action taken within 7 days of the Head becoming aware of the disclosure.

### *Stage Three*

8. **Procedure:** If no such response is forthcoming you should once more inform the Head of the disclosure.

### *Stage Four*

9. **Outside body:** If you do not receive a response within 7 days you shall be entitled to notify a relevant and appropriate body outside the School which may include:

- The Health and Safety Executive
- The Environment Agency
- The Information Commissioner
- The Department for Education
- The Department for Business Innovation and Skills
- The Police
- The Commission for Social Care Inspection
- Local Education Authority
- Examinations Awarding Body

10. **Bypassing the procedure:** In extreme circumstances you will have the right to raise your concern directly with a relevant and appropriate outside body without first having followed the stages above. This may however cause damage to the School and its reputation as well as constitute a breach of your own duty of confidentiality towards the School and this action should only be taken in extreme circumstances and after careful thought.

11. **Extreme circumstances:** The School will consider extreme circumstances exist where you have a reasonable belief that: the School will subject you to detriment if you inform an SMT member; a cover-up is being mounted by the School; or a disclosure made previously to an SMT member or the Head in accordance with the stages above has not prompted a satisfactory response.

12. **The media:** Even where extreme circumstances are thought to exist, you should under no circumstances approach a commercial body or the media with details of the suspected wrongdoing. If you approach any such body and/or where your concern is disclosed for personal gain, the School will consider this to be gross misconduct and immediate disciplinary action will be taken against you.



Employment Manual  
Whistleblowing



13. *Queries:* If you have any queries about this procedure you should contact the Head.

Approved by Shona Colaco  
September 2022

Approved by Aatif Hassan  
September 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aatif Hassan', is positioned below the text 'Approved by Aatif Hassan'.