



Huxlow Science College

Policy Owner	Department	Effective Date	Approval Date	Review Cycle	Revision Due Date
Karen Squires	HR	June 2021	15 June 2021	Bi-Annual	June 2023

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Policy Approver: Finance, Personnel & Premises Committee

Version Control

Version Number	Date of Change	Changes Made
1.0		Adoption of a Policy based on the EPM Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure. New template.



Huxlow

Science College

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1. Policy Name

This document is the Huxlow Science College's Whistleblowing Policy. The document is based on the Education Personnel Management (EPM) Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

2. Terms of Reference

Definitions:

"Senior Leader" refers to a member of the Senior Leadership team i.e. Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, and Strategic Finance Manager.

3. Purpose

To set out the Governing Body's policy for dealing with concerns raised by employees which relate to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work (see paragraph 5). Allegations of child abuse against teachers and other staff and volunteers is to be dealt with in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance for schools and colleges and Huxlow Science College's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. Grievances or Bullying or Harassment will be dealt with according to the College's Grievance and Bullying and Harassment Policy.

4. Background

As employees are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the school, it is important that they feel able to express their concerns without fear of harassment or victimisation. Otherwise they may find it easier to ignore the concern rather than report it. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 recognises this fact and is designed to protect employees, who make certain disclosures of information in 'the public interest', from detriment and/or dismissal. This policy builds on the provisions of the Act.

The Governing Body is committed to the highest possible standard of operation, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment this policy relates to employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers with serious concerns and all are encouraged to come forward and voice those concerns. This policy document makes it clear that employees can do so without fear of reprisals; it is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the College rather than overlooking a problem or alerting anyone external to the school.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

5. Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Provide avenues for employees to raise concerns internally as a matter of course, and receive feedback on any action taken
- ensure that concerns are taken seriously and treated consistently and fairly and dealt with quickly and appropriately;
- reassure employees that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing where they have a genuine concern;

- allow employees to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the Governing Body's response.

A **whistleblower** is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the matters below. If employees have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern) they should report it under this policy. **Whistleblowing** is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work that is in the public's interest to disclose. This may include:

- (a) criminal activity;
- (b) miscarriages of justice;
- (c) danger to health and safety;
- (d) damage to the environment;
- (e) failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
- (f) bribery;
- (g) financial fraud or mismanagement;
- (h) negligence;
- (i) breach of our internal policies and procedures;
- (j) conduct likely to damage our reputation;
- (k) unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- (l) public examination fraud;
- (m) serious breach of governance;
- (n) the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

Before initiating the Whistleblowing Procedure employees should consider the following:

- the responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour rests with all employees;
- employees should use line managers or team meetings and other opportunities to raise questions and seek clarification on issues which are of day-to-day concern;
- whilst it can be difficult to raise concerns about the practice or behaviour of a colleague, employees must act to prevent an escalation of the problem and to prevent themselves being potentially implicated.

The Whistleblowing Procedure should not be used for complaints about an employee's personal circumstances, such as the way they have been treated at work. In these cases an employee should use Huxlow Science College's Grievance Procedure (or anti-harassment policy as appropriate); if the matter relates to salary, the salary review procedures documented in the Whole School Pay Policy.

6. Safeguards

Harassment or Victimisation

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns in the knowledge they will be taken seriously. The Governing Body recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. The Governing Body will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect employees when they have a genuine concern.

This does not mean that if an employee is already the subject of internal procedures such as disciplinary or redundancy, that those procedures will be halted as a result of that employee raising a concern under the whistleblowing policy.**Confidentiality**

We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. The Governing Body will make every effort to protect an employee's identity though this cannot be guaranteed.

As indicated above, identity will be protected as far as possible, but should the investigation into the concern require the employee to be named as the source of the information, that this will be discussed with the employee before their name is disclosed.

An employee who approaches the media before they have gone through the internal procedure and contacted a prescribed person is unlikely to be protected by whistleblowing law.

Anonymous Allegations

Employees are encouraged to put their name to an allegation. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information and it is also more difficult to establish whether allegations are credible. Anonymous allegations will be considered at the discretion of the Governing Body. In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised;
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Untrue Allegations

If an employee makes an allegation where they have a genuine concern, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that employee. If, however, it is concluded that an employee has made malicious or vexatious allegations, or with a view to personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against that employee.

Unfounded Allegations

Following investigation, allegations may be confirmed as unfounded. This outcome will be notified to the employee who raised the concern, who will be informed that the Governing Body deems the matter to be concluded and that it should not be raised again unless new evidence becomes available.

Support to Employees

It is recognised that raising concerns can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support will be made available, as appropriate, to both the employee(s) raising the concerns and any employee(s) subject to investigation. The Whistleblowing Policy will be provided and explained at Induction.

7. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy/procedure. The policy/procedure will be reviewed by the Governing Body as necessary.

Signed:
Chair Finance, Personnel & Premises Committee

Date: