

Policy: Whistleblowing

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Mission Statement

At Abbey School our aim is to teach to inspire, motivate and nurture the next generation of creative and critical thinkers. We work in partnership with parents and the community to achieve the highest standards. Our main goal is to encourage our children to be resilient, respectful, responsible independent learners, equipped for lifelong learning. Through stimulating, safe learning environments and excellent opportunities to succeed in and out of the classroom, we encourage children’s progress and achievements.

Our Core Values

RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, RESILIENCE

These 3 core values underpin the ethos of Abbey School. Our young pupils are encouraged to understand these values and how they develop, initially, at the micro level around themselves, their friendships, their families and our school. Later, our older pupils begin to understand how these self-same values affect our lives on the macro level, with all this means for their lives as they grow into adults and their environment of Devon, the United Kingdom, and also the planet in which we live.

Abbey School’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Miss Anna Payne

What is “Whistleblowing”

“Whistleblowing” is reporting illegal or improper conduct or concerns about safeguarding children or young people with the secure knowledge that no action will be brought against the person reporting any legitimate concerns (see 2.3). This is a procedure and guidance for staff

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Abbey School expects the highest standards of conduct from all employees, and will treat seriously any concern that an employee may have about illegal or improper conduct.
- 1.2 Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the Headteacher any serious impropriety or breach of procedure.
- 1.3 This policy is reviewed annually to assess effectiveness based on staff confidence in recognising misconduct, knowing how they can report it, and reporting if necessary.

2 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROCEDURE?

- 2.1 This procedure is designed to enable employees to notify the Headteacher (but see 4.1) of any reasonable suspicion of illegal or improper conduct. Where the concerns are about safeguarding children or young people, the school’s Designated Senior Person for Child Protection should be notified (see 7 below).
- 2.2 It is a procedure in which the Headteacher will be expected to act swiftly and constructively in the investigation of any concerns in accordance with the school’s disciplinary procedure.
- 2.3 Concern about a colleague’s professional capability should not be dealt with using this procedure (but see section 8 below).

3 WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?

- 3.1 This procedure is not designed to replace or be used as an alternative to the grievance procedure, which should be used where an employee is only aggrieved about his/her own situation.

Employees who are worried about wrong doing at work do not necessarily have a personal grievance.
- 3.2 Employees must act in good faith and must have reasonable grounds for believing the information to be accurate.
- 3.3 No employee who uses this procedure in good faith will be penalised for doing so. The school will not tolerate harassment and/or victimisation of any employee raising concerns.
- 3.4 An employee who is not sure whether the conduct he/she is concerned about does constitute illegal or improper conduct or is unsure about how to proceed can contact any of the names listed in section 8 for advice.

- 3.5 Financial regulations require any employee who suspects fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity to ensure this is reported to the Chief Internal Auditor for possible investigation. Normally you must first report any suspicion of such an irregularity to the Headteacher (but see 4.1), who will in turn report it to the Chief Internal Auditor. In most cases this will be done through your line management structure.

4 MECHANISM FOR RAISING CONCERNS

- 4.1 Where the issue concerns your Headteacher or, having made your report, you believe he/she has failed to take appropriate action, then you should bring it to the attention of the Safeguarding Team.
- 4.2 Employees who feel unable to follow this route, for whatever reason, have the option of contacting one of the names listed in section 9.
- 4.3 Depending on the nature of the concern the complainant will be asked to justify and support their claim. Normally the complainant will be asked to do this in writing. It will, therefore, be helpful to note down any facts and dates as they happen.
- 4.4 Where anonymity is requested efforts will be made to meet the request where appropriate but that might not always be possible. The earlier and more open the expression of concern the easier it will be to take appropriate action.
- 4.5 Each case will be investigated thoroughly with the aim of informing the complainant of the outcome of any investigation as quickly as possible.

5 PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO A WHISTLEBLOWING CONCERN

- 5.1 When a concern is received by the Headteacher, they will:
- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable timeframe. The person raising the concern may be joined by a union representative.
 - Get as much detail as possible about this concern at the meeting and record this information.
 - Reiterate at this meeting that they are protected from any unfair treatment or risk of dismissal as a result of raising the concern. If the concern is found to be malicious, disciplinary action may be taken.
 - Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. Further investigation should be organised if appropriate, including referral to external bodies to investigate or reporting to the police.
 - The person raising the concern should be informed of how the matter is being investigated, including an estimated time frame.
- 5.2 When the outcome of the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern or whether further investigation was needed -is complete:
- The investigation person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrong-doing has occurred.

Abbey School & EYFS

- The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the Local Authority or the Police.
- They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation (though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality).
- Beyond immediate actions, the Headteacher and other staff (if necessary) will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrong-doing.

5.3 Whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

6 WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IF AN ISSUE IS RAISED WITH A DIFFERENT MEMBER OF STAFF?

6.1 If a member of staff (other than the Headteacher) is approached by a colleague on a matter of concern as defined in this document, he/she should be advised to take the matter to the Headteacher (but see 4.1).

7 EXAMPLES OF ILLEGAL AND/OR IMPROPER CONDUCT

- fraudulent or improper use of the school's money or assets
- dangerous practices at work
- corruptly receiving any gift or advantage
- allowing private interests to override the interests of the school.

8 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

8.1 All employees have a duty to report concerns about the safety and welfare of pupils/students

8.2 Concerns about any of the following should be reported to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- physical abuse of a pupil/student
- sexual abuse of a pupil/student
- emotional abuse of a pupil/student
- neglect of a pupil/student
- an intimate or improper relationship between an adult and a pupil/student

The school's DSL is: See Heading on Page 1

8.3 The reason for the concern may be the actions of a colleague (including a more senior colleague), another pupil/student or someone outside the school. Whatever the reason, concerns must be reported.

9 NAMES TO CONTACT (see 3.4 and 4.2)

Headmistress – Miss F. Greinig

DSL – Miss Anna Payne

DDSL – Miss Bryony Dorrans and Miss Sophie Hunt

LADO = Local Authority Designated Officer, Ivan Sullivan = 01803 208541 / 07929247310

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line = 0800 028 0285

Other emergency numbers you may care to contact:

Call the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01803 208100 or email mash@torbay.gov.uk to make a report.

Outside of office hours you can call the Emergency Duty Service on:
0300 456 4876

In an emergency always dial 999.