Whistleblowing Policy

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About this policy

"The Southover Partnership is committed to adhering to the principles of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and will ensure that all disclosures made in good faith are thoroughly investigated and resolved. We will provide support to whistleblowers throughout the process and ensure that no individual will suffer any form of retaliation for raising a genuine concern."

In situations where staff, parents, Trustees, local authorities, or community members identify activities that raise concerns, the Trustees of The Southover Partnership have implemented this Whistle Blowing Policy. This policy serves as a framework for confidentially raising concerns and ensures a thorough and appropriate investigation, aiming to resolve the issue satisfactorily.

Within this policy, the term "whistle blower" refers to the individual raising a concern or making a complaint. This term is used without any negative connotation and aligns with the terminology recommended by Lord Nolan in the Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies, published in May 1996.

The Southover Partnership is dedicated to addressing fraud and other forms of malpractice with seriousness and commitment. We understand that certain concerns may be highly sensitive, and as such, we have established a system that enables the

confidential reporting of concerns within the organisation. Additionally, there is an option to report to an external party outside the organisation's management structure.

The Southover Partnership is committed to fostering a climate of trust and openness, ensuring that individuals with genuine concerns or suspicions can raise issues with the full confidence that they will be appropriately addressed and resolved, in alignment with current employment law. This policy specifically applies to suspected fraud and impropriety, and not to general grievances, which are handled under the organisation's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Grievance Procedures.

When Might this Whistle Blowing Policy Apply?

The Southover Partnership identifies the following activities or behaviours as matters to be addressed under this policy, in compliance with current employment law:

The Southover Partnership identifies the following activities or behaviours as matters to be addressed under this policy, in compliance with current employment law:

- Actions breaching the organisation's and statutory Safeguarding and Prevent Duties and procedures
- Manipulation of accounting records and finances
- Inappropriate use of the organisation's assets or funds
- Decision-making for personal gain
- Any criminal activity
- Abuse of position
- Fraud and deceit
- Corruption
- Bribery
- Physical, mental, or sexual abuse
- Theft
- Unfair discrimination
- Dangerous practices
- Serious damage to the environment
- Negligence
- Unprofessional behaviour
- Evasion of statutory responsibilities
- Endangerment of health and safety
- Miscarriage of justice
- Risk of harm to a child or children
- Serious breaches of the organisation's procedures that may advantage a particular party (e.g., tampering with tender documentation or failure to register a personal interest)

Such malpractice may be perpetrated by school/outreach employees, council employees, contractors, or members of the Trustee Board.

Complaints that don't count as whistleblowing

This procedure is not intended for addressing general dissatisfaction at work or as a substitute for your existing employment rights with the school/Outreach service. Personal grievances, such as bullying, harassment, or discrimination, are not covered by whistleblowing law unless the case is in the public interest. Such issues should be reported under your employer's grievance policy, in accordance with current employment law.

What Action Should the 'Whistle Blower' Take?

The Southover Partnership encourages the "whistle blower" to initially raise concerns internally with the Executive Headteacher or Chair of Trustees. This approach allows staff in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to address and rectify the issue and provide an explanation for the behaviour or activity. In accordance with current employment law, The Southover Partnership has designated specific individuals to handle such matters, and the "whistle blower" is invited to choose the most appropriate individual to address the concern.

Angela Moore - Executive Headteacher
Kingsbury Manor
288 Kingsbury Road
Roe Green Park Kingsbury
NW9 9HA
T: 0208 446 0300
E: eht@southoverpartnership.com

Neil Taylor - Chair of Trustees
Kingsbury Manor
288 Kingsbury Road
Roe Green Park Kingsbury
NW9 9HA
E: neil.taylor@southoverpartnership.com

The "whistle blower" may choose to raise the concern in person, by telephone, or in writing to one of the designated individuals listed above. All matters will be treated with strict confidentiality, and anonymity will be respected wherever possible, in alignment with current employment law.

If the "whistle blower" believes the issue is too serious or sensitive to address internally within the organisation, they should direct the matter initially to the relevant officers in the Local Authority (who place pupils with us). Each Local Authority has its own procedures for handling such matters and will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of the "whistle blower."

To report safeguarding concern outside of the school, please follow the specific safeguarding procedures:

Protect (formerly Public concern at Work) Independent Charity:https://protect-advice.org.uk/
Contact our Advice Line - Protect - Speak up stop harm (protect-advice.org.uk)
Address: The Green House,
244-254 Cambridge Heath Road, London
E2 9DA
Telephone: 020 3117 2520

Additionally, information and advice can be obtained from the charity 'Public Concern at Work.' This charity provides free legal advice in certain situations to individuals concerned about serious malpractice in the workplace. According to their literature, all matters are handled with strict confidentiality and without obligation. Contact details for the charity are as follows:

Public Concern at Work, Suite 306,
16 Baldwins Gardens, London,
EC1N 7RJ
Telephone 020 7404 6609

How will the matter be dealt with?

Under the whistleblowing policy, the individual(s) receiving the information or allegation, known as the Investigating Officer(s), will conduct a preliminary investigation. This investigation aims to establish the facts of the matter and determine whether the concern has merit and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may reveal the need to involve third parties for additional information, advice, or assistance, such as other staff members, legal or personnel advisors, the police, the relevant Local Authority, or the Department for Education (DfE).

If you raise a concern under this policy, we will write to you within 14 working days to inform you of:

- What we intend to do
- How long we anticipate the process will take
- Whether any additional information is required from you

Records of the work undertaken and actions taken will be maintained throughout the investigation. The Investigating Officer(s), in collaboration with the Chair of Trustees, will determine how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken, which may include disciplinary action or referral to third parties such as the police. The "whistle blower" will be informed of the investigation's results and the actions taken to address the matter. The matter will be reported to the Trustees and/or the relevant Local Authority, depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and its substantiation.

If you feel unable to follow this procedure or are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may raise your concerns with the relevant Prescribed Person designated by the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 1999 or any subsequent statute or statutory instrument that supersedes this legislation.

Respecting confidentiality

The Southover Partnership is committed to respecting the confidentiality and anonymity of the "whistle blower" and will endeavor to protect them from reprisals, in alignment with current employment law. The Southover Partnership will not tolerate any attempts to victimise the "whistle blower" or to obstruct the raising of concerns. Any such actions will be subject to appropriate disciplinary or corrective measures, as deemed necessary.

Raising unfounded malicious concerns

Raising unfounded malicious concerns is taken seriously under this policy. Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns, knowing these will be taken seriously. However, if individuals raise malicious or unfounded concerns, or attempt to cause disruption, this will be addressed seriously. Such actions may constitute a disciplinary offence, require another form of appropriate penalty based on the circumstances, and/or result in referral to the police, in accordance with current employment law.

Conclusion

The Southover Partnership's strong practices in internal control, both financial and non-financial, along with the external regulatory environment in which the organisation operates, ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety are rare. This Whistle Blowing Policy serves as a reference document to establish a framework for confidentially raising issues internally, and if necessary, outside the organisation's management structure. This document is a public commitment that concerns will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated, in alignment with current employment law.