

## WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY



## BISHOP RAMSEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

<b>Date of Policy:</b>	July 2019
<b>Approval Date:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
<b>Approval Body:</b>	Trust Board
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<b>Review Body:</b>	Finance, Resources and Audit Committee
<b>Person Responsible:</b>	Mrs W Bhad



*“Birds roost with their own kind, so honesty comes home to those who practise it.”  
Ecclesiasticus 27.9.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Veritas Educational Trust 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 Head of School any serious impropriety or breach of procedure, including but not limited to misconduct, suspected misconduct, malpractice, illegal acts child protection issues, or when the safeguarding of a child has been compromised.
- 1.3 Where the concern relates to the Head of School or a member of the central trust staff employees should bring that concern to the CEO. Where the concern relates to the CEO staff should report to the Chair of the Trust Board
- 1.4 Employees who make a disclosure reasonably believing that a matter falling within the following paragraphs has been or is likely to be deliberately concealed are protected by law (under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) from any victimisation for having raised these issues:
  - 1.4.1 a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed;
  - 1.4.2 a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation which they are subject;
  - 1.4.3 a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
  - 1.4.4 The safeguarding of a child has been compromised
  - 1.4.5 the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered; and
  - 1.4.6 The environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged.
  - 1.4.7 Financial fraud or mismanagement.

## **2. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROCEDURE?**

- 2.1 The procedure is designed to enable employees to notify the Head of School of any reasonable suspicion of illegal or improper conduct. (Refer to paragraph 6 for examples of illegal / improper conduct.) Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected. The procedure requires all employees to act responsibly to uphold the reputation of the school and to help maintain public confidence.
- 2.2 It is a procedure in which the Head of School will be expected to act swiftly and constructively in the investigation of any concerns in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.
- 2.3 Concerns about a colleague's professional capability should not be dealt with using this procedure.

### **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 an employee experiencing detrimental treatment as a result of raising concerns. In the event that an employee believes (s)he is being subjected to a detriment by any person within the School as a result of her/his decision to invoke the procedure the employee must inform the assisting person immediately and appropriate action will be taken to protect the employee from any reprisals. Detrimental treatment could include dismissal, disciplinary action, threats and any other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern.
- 3.4 Employees must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If an employee is involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 3.5 If, however, an employee makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the employee.
- 3.6 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 the Head of School, CEO or any of the professional organisations for advice.
- 3.7 Financial regulations require all members of staff to act with propriety in the use of official resources and the handling and use of public funds, whether they are involved with cash or payments systems, receipts or dealing with suppliers or the School's decision-making bodies.
- 3.8 If an employee suspects fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity this should be reported to their Senior Leadership Team line manager in the first instance and then the matter should be referred to the Finance Director for further investigations.

### **4. MECHANISM FOR RAISING CONCERNS**

- 4.1 Where the issue concerns the Head of School or Finance Director or, having made a report, the complainant believes he/she has failed to take appropriate action, then this should be brought to the attention of the CEO.
- 4.2 In the case of safeguarding issues, the [safeguarding children policy](#) should be followed.
- 4.3 Employees who may wish to seek further advice on whistle blowing may obtain information from [www.gov.uk/whistleblowing](http://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing)
- 4.4 This policy provides an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. Employees are encouraged to disclose 'whistleblowing' concerns, in the first instance, via this policy rather than going straight to external agencies. Reporting concerns, for instance to the press, may seriously

undermine any investigation into the issues of concern. Advice can be obtained from a trade union representative or 'Public Concern at Work' (by telephone, 020 7 117 2520) or via the website [www.pcaw.org.uk](http://www.pcaw.org.uk)), an independent charity which gives advice on how to raise concerns about serious malpractice at work.

- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 Employees who want to use the procedure but feel uneasy about it may wish to consult their trade union initially and bring a friend or trade union representative along to any discussions, so long as the third party is independent of the issue.
- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 Each case will be investigated thoroughly with the aim of informing the complainant of the outcome of any investigation as quickly as possible.
- 4.9 If the employee is dissatisfied with the response to their disclosure, (s)he may refer their concerns to the Chair of Governors, or the Chair of Trustees if their disclosure had initially been to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors / Chair of Trustees will take appropriate actions, such as:
  - 4.9.1 reviewing the investigation to date and giving instructions on its further conduct;
  - 4.9.2 assuming responsibility for an investigation in progress;
  - 4.9.3 initiating an investigation;
  - 4.9.4 delegating an investigation to an appropriate external agency; and / or
  - 4.9.5 apprising the Local Governing Board or Board of Trustees of the employee's concerns and actions taken thus far.
- 4.10 The Chair of Governors / Chair of Trustees will inform the employee in writing about the outcome of the investigation or with a timescale for being notified of the outcome of the investigation. The employee will receive as much feedback as possible subject to the Trust's duty of confidence to other parties who may be involved.

## **5. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IF AN ISSUE IS RAISED WITH A SENIOR MEMBER OF STAFF?**

- 5.1 If a senior member of staff (other than the Head of School) 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 Head of School.

## **6. EXAMPLES OF ILLEGAL AND/OR IMPROPER CONDUCT**

6.1 The following is not an exhaustive list of examples of illegal and / or improper conduct:

- fraudulent or improper use of the school's money or assets
- abuse of students or of other employees
- dangerous practices at work
- corruptly receiving any gift or advantage
- allowing private interests and those of the school to conflict
- damage to the environment
- actions contrary to any of the Trust's policies
- the deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above matters