

Farrowdale House

INDEPENDENT PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Proprietors:
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Whistleblowing Policy

Adopted: February 2021

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Farrowdale House Independent School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability.

The School encourages all members of staff and pupils to raise genuine concerns about malpractice or impropriety at the earliest practicable stage. This policy sets out a process whereby employees who have concerns about malpractice or impropriety may, in good faith, raise those concerns at a high level in the School, outside of normal line management, and without fear of detriment. The procedure also seeks to balance the need to provide safeguards for members of staff who raise genuine concerns about malpractice or impropriety against the need to protect other members of staff, pupils and the School against uninformed or vexatious allegations.

Key Principles

Farrowdale House Independent School aims to have a culture of safety and raising concerns;

Farrowdale House Independent School values its staff and being reflective in its practice;

There are clear procedures for reporting and handling concerns;

Relevant training and support is provided for all staff;

That there be transparency and accountability in relation to how concerns are received and handled.

Legal Framework

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects a worker from victimisation and dismissal following disclosure by that worker of a matter threatening the public interest, as long as the case satisfies the detailed conditions set out in the Act. To be protected, the worker must make a "qualifying disclosure" and ensure that it is made in one of the ways described in the Act.

"Qualifying disclosure"

This is any disclosure of information which, in the reasonable belief of the worker making the disclosure, tends to show one or more of the following:

- That a criminal offence has been, is being or is likely to be committed;
- That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject. This includes any contractual or other common law obligation, statutory duty or

requirement or administrative law requirement. It could include academic or professional malpractice or a failure to comply with any rules, regulations or codes of practice of the institution;

- That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- That the health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered;
- That the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged; or
- That information tending to show any of the above has been is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

Safeguarding

Nothing within this policy is intended to prevent staff from complying with their statutory obligations in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education. In particular:

Safeguarding Policy: You should raise any initial safeguarding concerns with the Principal in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Whistleblowing Policy: You should follow this procedure to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices at the School or potential failures by the School or staff to properly safeguard the welfare of pupils if you are concerned that the School's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are not being followed correctly. The NSPCC have a Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285.

Children's Social Care: In exceptional circumstances, or if at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care immediately. The Oldham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) can be contacted on: 0161 770 7777.

Grievances

This procedure should not however be used where you have a complaint relating to your personal circumstances in the workplace. The Grievance Procedure contained in the Staff Handbook should be used in such cases. The Grievance Procedure contains provision for mediation and dispute resolution where necessary.

Detriment

No disciplinary action will be taken against anyone for making a disclosure in accordance with this procedure. This will not prevent the School from bringing disciplinary action in cases where there are grounds to believe that a disclosure has been made maliciously or vexatiously or where an external disclosure is made in breach of this procedure without reasonable grounds or otherwise than to an appropriate public authority.

Stage one

Procedure:

You should disclose the suspected wrongdoing first to the Headteacher. In the event that the Headteacher is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you shall be entitled to proceed directly to Stage Two of this procedure.

Response:

You can expect a response detailing to whom the disclosure has been notified or any action taken within seven days of the disclosure.

Stage two

Procedure: If no response is forthcoming after seven days or if the Headteacher involved in the suspected wrongdoing you shall be entitled to notify the Proprietor.

Response: You can expect a response detailing any action taken within seven days of the disclosure.

Stage three

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

the Local Authority Designated Officer;

Children's Social Care;

the Health and Safety Executive;

the Environment Agency;

the Information Commissioner;

the Department for Education (DfE);

an examination board

the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial strategy;

the Police;

the Charity Commission;

the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI);

the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

the local authority Channel panel;

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. In these circumstances it would be appropriate for staff to raise the concern directly with the relevant external authority (which may include those in the list above).

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 the Headteacher in accordance with Stage one above or if you inform the Proprietor in accordance with Stage two; a cover-up is being mounted by the School; or a disclosure made previously to the Headteacher or Proprietor in accordance with the stages above has not prompted a satisfactory response.

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 may consider this to be gross misconduct and immediate disciplinary action may be taken against you.