

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Updated: September 2015

Review date: September 2017

Reporting illegal or improper conduct or concerns about safeguarding children or young people.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is adapted from the Model Policy provided by Hertfordshire County Council and was reviewed in June 2014.
- 1.2 Adeyfield 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.
- 1.3 The school is committed to ensuring that malpractice is prevented and, should it arise, immediately dealt with.
- 1.4 Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the Headteacher, Mr Scott Martin, any serious impropriety or breach of procedure.
- 1.5 This procedure has been introduced in consultation with the trade unions and professional associations.
- 1.6 This policy uses the Public Interest Disclosure Act's (PIDA) (1998) definition of whistleblowing as 'the disclosure by an individual or professional of confidential information which relates to some danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct connected with the work place, be it of the employee or his/her fellow employees'.

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 7 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 If it is discovered that you have raised a concern maliciously, vexatiously, not in good faith or with a view to personal gain or that you have breached the terms of this procedure, you will lose the protection granted under this procedure and may be subject to disciplinary action under the disciplinary procedure. Similarly, disciplinary action may follow an unjustified external disclosure made without first exhausting the internal procedure set out in this policy.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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 the Headteacher or, having made your report, you believe he has failed to take appropriate action, then you should bring it to the attention of the Chair of Governors.
- 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 8.
- 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 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 Each case will be investigated thoroughly with the aim of informing the complainant of the outcome of any investigation as quickly as possible.

5. What should you do if an issue is raised with a member of staff?

- 5.1 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).

6. 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.

7. Safeguarding children and young people

- 7.1 All employees have a duty to report concerns about the safety and welfare of students.
- 7.2 Concerns about any of the following should be reported to the school's Designated Senior Person for Child Protection (DSP), Mrs Karen Howard:
- physical abuse of a student
 - sexual abuse of a student
 - emotional abuse of a student
 - neglect of a student
 - an intimate or improper relationship between an adult and a student
- 7.3 The reason for the concern may be the actions of a colleague (including a more senior colleague), a governor, another student or someone outside the school. Whatever the reason, concerns must be reported.

8. Names to contact (see 3.4 and 4.2)

Herts HR

Assistant Director HR: Louise Tibbert
Tel: 01992 556653

Legal, Member & Statutory Services

Chief Legal Officer: Kathryn Pettitt
Tel: 01992 555527

County Internal Audit

Chief Internal Auditor: Helen Maneuf
Head of Assurance Services
Tel: 01438 845502

Or via your Professional Association or Trade Union Representative, a list of the current County Secretaries is available on the grid.