



## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

***This Policy includes the Nursery and Early Years Foundation Stage***

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### **1: INTRODUCTION**

Hazelwood School is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. An important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable staff and other members of Hazelwood School to voice concerns in a safe, responsible and effective manner. We have a culture of safety and of raising concerns. We value our staff and we are reflective in our practice.

Hazelwood is charged with safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and young people in care and its duty of care to all staff, volunteers and other adults. It is committed to dealing responsibly, openly (transparently) and professionally, with any genuine concerns. Training in whistleblowing takes place annually at the September INSET and also as part of staff induction.

Concerns may be about:

- Child safeguarding/child protection issues
- Potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime
- Malpractice (poor or unsafe practice) – be it a danger to you, pupils, parents/carers and staff working in the establishment
- Financial malpractice
- Breach of legal obligations to others
- Danger to Health and Safety
- Incidents of bullying, harassment or other breach of equality and diversity policies

Hazelwood School recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisals from those responsible. We will make certain that you will suffer no recrimination or victimisation as a result of raising a genuine concern about malpractice.

### **2: RESPONSIBILITIES**

All School Staff are responsible for raising concerns. This should be regarded as a professional and moral obligation, and in no way an infringement of the rights of others. The policy cannot operate without your help. The simple fact is that in many cases you or another member of staff may suspect something is going wrong, long before school managers find out about it. In worst cases, this may not be until an accident has happened, or serious damage has been caused.

### **3: WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN**

If something at school is troubling you enough for you to mention it to your family or friends, please tell a member of SLT or the DSL at the earliest opportunity.

**Named Lead DSL** – James Walton: waltonj@hazelwoodschool.com 01883 712194

Deputy DSL – William Fagg: [faggw@hazelwoodschool.com](mailto:faggw@hazelwoodschool.com)

Deputy DSL – Helen Roe: roeh@hazelwoodschool.com

Lead DSL (EYFS) Howard Garlick: [garlickh@hazelwoodschool.com](mailto:garlickh@hazelwoodschool.com) 01883 714171

Deputy DSL (EYFS) Paula Rutter: rutterp@hazelwoodschool.com

Deputy DSL (EYFS) Sarah Pike: pikes@hazelwoodshcool.com

Head: Lindie Louw: louwl@hazelwoodschool.com 01883 733831

Where there is a concern regarding the Head should be passed on to the Chair of Governors without informing the Head first. Chair of Governors Annabel Lark: AnnabelLark@hazelwoodschool.com

#### **Protection**

This Policy is designed to offer protection to those employees of Hazelwood School who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made:

- in good faith
- in the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice or impropriety and if they make the disclosure to an appropriate person (see below).

It is important to note that no protection from internal disciplinary procedures is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure. In an extreme case malicious or wild allegations could give rise to legal action on the part of the persons complained about.

#### **Confidentiality**

Hazelwood School will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

#### **Anonymous Allegations**

This Policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of the School. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised;
- the credibility of the concern;
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

#### **Untrue Allegations**

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

### **4: PROCEDURE**

The earlier a concern is reported the easier it is to take action. As a first step concerns should normally be raised with a member of the SLT or the DSL. Where there is a concern regarding the Head should be passed on to the Chair of Governors without informing the Head first. Concerns are better raised in writing. You are invited to set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. If you do not feel able to put your concern in writing, you can telephone or meet the appropriate member of the SLT.

Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for your concern. You may invite your trade union or professional association to raise a matter on your behalf.

### **How the School will respond**

The action taken by Hazelwood School will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- be investigated internally;
- be referred to the Police;
- be referred to Surrey Child Protection Services;
- form the subject of other inquiries.

In order to protect individuals and the School, initial enquires will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate (except for safeguarding allegations against a member of staff in which case the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO 0300 123 1620) will be contacted within one working day and before any investigations take place) and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (such as Safeguarding Children) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. The school will give due weight to the views of the LADO and to the policy when making a decision about further action. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

Within ten working days of a concern being received, the School will write to you:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response.

The amount of contact between the members of SLT considering the issues and you, will depend on the nature of the matters raised the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from you.

When any meeting is arranged, you have the right, if you so wish, to be accompanied by a Trade Union or professional association representative or a friend who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

Hazelwood will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. The school will take appropriate steps to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity.

The School accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, you will receive information about the outcome of any investigations.

Where appropriate and necessary the school will provide mediation and dispute resolution support.

The school has a commitment to promptly report to the DBS any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used to regulated activity and

the DBS central referral criteria are met, that is, they have caused harm or posed a risk of harm to a child.

### **External Procedures**

Where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff shall have a right of access to an external person/body. This may include (depending on the subject matter of the disclosure) HMRC, the Audit Commission, the Health and Safety Executive and/or the LADO (where the disclosure relates to a child protection issue).

It should be noted that under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where a member of staff may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the individual reasonably believes:

- that exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- that the School would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- where they believe they would be victimised by the School;
- where the Secretary of State has ordered it.

### **External contact numbers are:**

Staff can seek advice from Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609, or [helpline@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:helpline@pcaw.co.uk),

Ofsted whistleblowing tel no: 08456 404046, or [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk);

Charity Commission website which gives whistleblowing advice.

LADO 0300 123 1620

RIAS 0300 123 1620

NSPCC Whistleblowing 0800 028 0285