

LANCASTER GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Purpose of the Policy	<p>The aim of this policy is to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All school employees and volunteers know what the school policy is on whistle blowing within the school • There are appropriate avenues for staff to raise genuine concerns and receive feedback on any action taken • LGGS fulfils its statutory responsibility to respect the rights of children and to safeguard and promote their welfare
Teacher responsible for Policy	Jackie Cahalin
Dated	<p>April 2013</p> <p>Reviewed May 2016, November 2018</p>
Related Material	<p>Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998</p> <p>Human Rights Act 1998</p> <p>Whistleblowing guidance for maintained schools August 2014</p>

B. Review dates for this policy

Review Date	Changes made	By whom
May 2016	Named member of staff and governor	JSC
November 2018	External Disclosures	JSC

- 1 **Status:** This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be amended from time to time.
- 2 **Who is covered by this policy:** This policy applies to the School's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to individuals such as agency staff and consultants and volunteers who are not our employees, but who work at the School (collectively referred to as a "Worker" in this policy).
- 3 **Policy statement:** The School is committed to working with honesty and integrity and we expect all Workers to maintain high standards of working in accordance with our Code of Conduct. However, all schools face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur. The named member of staff with responsibility for whistleblowing is the Headteacher. The governor with responsibility is the Chair of Governors.
- 4 **Whistleblowing:** Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:
 - 4.1 criminal activity;
 - 4.2 miscarriages of justice;
 - 4.3 danger to health and safety;
 - 4.4 damage to the environment;
 - 4.5 failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
 - 4.6 bribery;
 - 4.7 financial fraud or mismanagement;
 - 4.8 negligence;
 - 4.9 breach of our internal policies and procedures including our Code of Conduct
 - 4.10 conduct likely to damage our reputation;
 - 4.11 unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
 - 4.12 Other workplace-specific concerns;
 - 4.13 the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.
- 5 **Whistleblower:** This policy is designed to deal with disclosure of information by a Worker who raises a genuine concern in good faith relating to any of above. If a Worker has any genuine concerns related to actual or suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of the School's activities they should report it under this policy (a "whistleblowing concern"). All types of wrongdoing are included whether they are acts committed by fellow Workers, faults in School procedures or oversights which should be rectified. This policy should be used even in the event that the act or omission causing you concern has finished or has not yet started.

- 6 **Grievances:** This policy should not however be used where you have a complaint relating to your personal circumstances in the workplace. The Grievance Procedure should be used in such cases.
- 7 **Detriment:** Provided that this policy is used correctly and you raise a genuine whistleblowing concern, in good faith, relating to any of the above you will not suffer any detriment. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or less favourable treatment resulting from raising a concern. An unreasonable failure to follow this policy may however make the whistleblowing concern unreasonable and the protection given to you by this policy may be lost.
- 8 **Protection:** Workers who are concerned about or receive reprisals from colleagues because they have raised whistleblowing concerns through this policy should immediately let the Head or Chair of Governors, as appropriate, know. The School will not tolerate any reprisals against Workers who have acted in good faith to report actual or suspected wrongdoing. Those responsible for any reprisals, threats or unwanted conduct will be investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 9 **Confidentiality:** If you raise a whistleblowing concern, we will make every effort to keep it confidential and where appropriate, your identity a secret. In certain circumstances it will be necessary for your identity to be disclosed, should this be the case the School will discuss this with you. A thorough investigation may be more difficult or impossible, in certain circumstances, if you remain anonymous. The School would encourage Workers with a genuine concern to come forward.
- 10 **Investigation:** Once you have raised a whistleblowing concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine what aspects need to be investigated. The scope of the investigation will vary depending on the nature of the concern. In some circumstances the School may appoint an investigator or team of investigators. The School will aim to keep you informed of the investigation and the timescale for completion. In some circumstances it will not be appropriate to disclose specific details to you due to the nature of the concern and/or the investigation. Any information which is disclosed to you must be treated as strictly confidential as this may affect the investigation or outcome.
- 11 **Accompanied:** You may be accompanied to any meeting required under this policy by a work colleague or trade union representative.

Stage one

- 12 **Procedure:** You should disclose the suspected wrongdoing first to your line manager. In the event that your line manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you shall be entitled to proceed directly to Stage Two of this policy.
- 13 **Response:** We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your whistleblowing concern and give an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

Stage two

- 14 **Procedure:** If no response is forthcoming or if your line manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing you shall be entitled to notify the Headteacher, as appropriate.
- 15 **Response:** We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your whistleblowing concern and give an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

Stage three

- 16 **Procedure:** While we cannot guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. However, if you are dissatisfied with how your whistleblowing concern has been addressed or if it is not appropriate to raise your whistleblowing concern under the above stages, for example because it relates to the personnel listed, then you should contact the Chair of Governors immediately.
- 17 **Outside body:** The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any whistleblowing concerns. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. There may be some circumstances when it is necessary or appropriate to raise your whistleblowing concern with an external body, such as a regulator. For example, if you do not receive a response within a reasonable period of time or you feel, having followed the procedure outlined in this policy, your whistleblowing concern has not been satisfactorily addressed. The School encourages you to seek advice before reporting a whistleblowing concern to anyone externally. Public Concern at Work is an independent charity which provides a confidential and free helpline for advice and guidance on whistleblowing. Their contact details are at the end of this policy. Some whistleblowing concerns may relate to a third party however the School encourages you to raise your whistleblowing concerns internally first, as set out above.
- 18 **External Disclosures:** As outlined above, in some circumstances it may be appropriate to notify a relevant body outside the School which may include:
- 18.1 the Health and Safety Executive
 - 18.2 The school's external auditor
 - 18.3 Your trade union
 - 18.4 Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
 - 18.5 Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
 - 18.6 A relevant voluntary organisation
 - 18.7 The police
 - 18.8 The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk
 - 18.9 Lancashire Social Care to raise a concern about a child 0300123 6720.
- 19 **The media:** It will very rarely, if ever, be appropriate for you to alert the media with details of the suspected or actual wrongdoing. If you are in doubt about raising your concerns or feel you need further advice from an external party the School would encourage you to speak to an external adviser on a confidential basis. Public Concern at Work is an independent whistleblowing charity, which offers a confidential helpline.
- 20 **False allegations:** If the School concludes that a Worker has made false allegations, acted maliciously, in bad faith or with a view to make personal gain the School may consider this to be gross misconduct and immediate disciplinary action may be taken against you.

- 21 **Queries:** If you have any queries about this policy, you should contact the Headteacher
- 22 **Public Concern at Work:** This is an independent charity and provides free confidential advice if you have a whistleblowing concern. This charity is not related to the School. Details can be obtained from their website: <http://www.pcaw.org.uk/>. Alternatively you can e-mail whistle@pcaw.org.uk or telephone 020 7404 6609.