

## **WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY**

*Rooted in Christ and Catholic tradition and under the guidance of its patron, St Edmund's aims to realise the God-given potential, in body, mind and spirit, of all members of its community through service and leadership.*

*Avita Pro Fide!*

*St Edmund's is committed to ensuring the welfare and protection of children in its care and this commitment is a fundamental part of the role of every employee.*

### **Introduction**

St Edmund's is committed to the highest possible standards of honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain these high standards, in accordance with our Code of Conduct for Staff and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of transparency and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.

This Policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers, interns and agency workers.

### **1 Aims and Scope of this Policy**

The aims of this policy are:

- a) To encourage staff 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.
- b) To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.
- c) To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the College may amend it at any time.

### **2 Personnel Responsible for the Policy**

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for this policy and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.

The HR Director has day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy and must ensure that all managers and other staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive appropriate support.

The HR Director, in conjunction with the Board of Governors, should review this policy from a legal and operational perspective at least once a year.

All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Comments, suggestions and queries should be addressed to the HR Director.

### **3. What is Whistleblowing?**

**Whistleblowing** is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- a) criminal activity;
- b) behaviour which puts/could put children at risk
- c) financial fraud or mismanagement;
- d) failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements, including ISI Regulations;
- e) bribery;
- f) facilitating tax evasion
- g) negligence;
- h) danger to health and safety;
- i) miscarriages of justice;
- j) damage to the environment;
- k) conduct likely to damage the College's reputation or financial wellbeing;
- l) unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- m) breach of the College's internal policies and procedures including our Staff Code of Conduct;
- n) potential failures on the College's safeguarding regime
- o) the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

**A whistleblower** is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of the College's activities (a **whistleblowing concern**) you should report it under this policy.

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the Grievance Procedure or Dignity at Work Policy as appropriate.

If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from the HR Director, whose contact details are at the end of this policy.

### **4 Raising a Whistleblowing Concern**

We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. In some cases they may refer the matter to the HR Director and mediation or dispute resolution may be considered where necessary.

However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your line manager or the HR Director has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact one of the following:

- a. The Senior Deputy Headmaster
- b. The Headmaster
- c. The Chair of Governors

Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or trade union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

We will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

## **5 Confidentiality**

We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the HR Director or one of the other contact points listed in paragraph 4 and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

## **6 Investigation and Outcome**

Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

In some cases we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **7 If you are Not Satisfied**

While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy you can help us to achieve this.

If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with one of the other key contacts in paragraph 4. Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

## **8 External Disclosures**

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely if ever be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. This can, for example, be through Protect's confidential helpline. Protect has a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a supplier, contractor, volunteer, parent, visitor or service provider. In some circumstances the law will protect you if you raise the matter with the third party directly. However we encourage you to report such concerns internally first. You should contact your line manager, the HR Director or one of the other individuals listed in paragraph 4.

## **9 Protection and Support for Whistleblowers**

It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the HR Director immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using the College's Grievance Procedure.

You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases the whistleblower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

## **10 Contacts**

Protect	Helpline: (020) 3117 2520 Email: use the contact form on their website Website: <a href="http://www.protect-advice.org.uk">www.protect-advice.org.uk</a>
Headmaster Mr Matthew Mostyn	Email: <a href="mailto:mmostyn@stedmundscollege.org">mmostyn@stedmundscollege.org</a> Phone: 01920 824204
Senior Deputy Headmaster Mrs Kate MacDonald.	Email: <a href="mailto:kmacdonald@stedmundscollege.org">kmacdonald@stedmundscollege.org</a> Phone: 01920 824346
Chair of Governors Mr Patrick Mitton	Email: <a href="mailto:chair@stedmundscollege.org">chair@stedmundscollege.org</a>
HR Director Mrs Helen Duffy/Mrs Lieze Nice	Email: <a href="mailto:hrdirector@stedmundscollege.org">hrdirector@stedmundscollege.org</a> Phone: 01920 824361



Hertfordshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	<a href="mailto:LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk">LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tony Purvis - 01992 555420 <a href="mailto:Tony.Purvis@hertfordshire.gov.uk">Tony.Purvis@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a> Marrie Moat -01992 555420 <a href="mailto:marrie.moat@hertfordshire.gov.uk">marrie.moat@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a> Andrea Garcia- Sangil- 01992 555420 <a href="mailto:andrea.garcia-sangil@hertfordshire.gov.uk">andrea.garcia-sangil@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Hertfordshire Child Protection Referral Unit (Social Services)	Client Services 0300 123 4043
Hertfordshire Senior Child Protection School (Generic & Non Urgent advice)	Frazer Smith 01992 588168
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (M.A.S.H) (Specific Cases Advice)	01438 737511
Essex Children's Services	0345 6037627
Local Police (Child Protection)	01707 355924
Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC Helpline	0808 8005000
Disclosure and Barring Service	03000 200 190 DBS Customer Services PO Box 3961 Royal Wootton Bassett SN4 4HR customerservices@db.s.gov.uk
The Children's Commissioner for England	Anne Longfield OBE Children's Commissioner for England Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street London SW1P 3BT 0800 528 0731 help.team@childcommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Frequency of Review: Annual  
Last Reviewed: Michaelmas 2019  
Next Review Date: Michaelmas 2020