



# WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

2024 - 2025

**Last review:** September 2024 (Nick Rothwell)

**Date for next review:** September 2025

# WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

## Introduction

1. Old Hall is required to have appropriate procedures in place for handling whistleblowing and for ensuring school staff know who they can contact if they wish to raise a concern.
2. This document explains the types of concerns that can be raised under this procedure, the legal protection for whistleblowers and how whistleblowing concerns will be handled.
3. This procedure should be followed for any whistleblowing matters raised by employees of the school, supply staff and other
4. Where the head is subject to these procedures, it will be managed by the Chair of the governing body.

## Policy Statement

The school is committed to the highest possible standards of:

- openness and inclusiveness
- accountability
- integrity.

## Aims of the Policy

- To encourage those working in the school to report suspected wrongdoing promptly, in the knowledge that it will be taken seriously.
- To provide guidance on how to raise concerns.
- to reassure staff that they are able to raise genuine concerns made in the public interest without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

## What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is when a worker reports certain types of wrongdoing or misconduct within an organisation. The wrongdoing disclosed must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others, e.g. pupils, and the general public.

The wrongdoing must relate to or show one of the following:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation
- a possible miscarriage of justice
- a Health & Safety risk
- damaging the environment
- misuse of public money
- corruption or unethical conduct
- abuse of pupils, students or other users
- deliberate concealment of any of these matters ■ any other substantial and relevant concern.

The concern could be about something that happened in the past, is currently happening or likely to happen in the future.

Concerns or complaints that employees wish to raise formally, about their own employment, should normally be raised using the school's Grievance Procedure, unless the employee believes the concern is in the public

interest. This includes for example, concerns related to working conditions, working relations, employment rights or bullying or harassment.

A whistleblower is defined as a person who in good faith reports certain types of wrongdoing. The wrongdoing that is disclosed must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others.

<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing/what-is-a-whistleblower>

#### Complaints that count as whistleblowing:

- Any act of fraud, bribery or irregularity
- A criminal offence
- A breach of the Staff Code of Conduct
- Someone's health and safety is in danger
- Risk or actual damage to the environment
- A miscarriage of justice
- The trust/company is breaking the law, eg doesn't have the right insurance
- You believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

#### Complaints that don't count as whistleblowing

Personal grievances (e.g. bullying, harassment, discrimination) aren't covered by whistleblowing law, unless your particular case is in the public interest. Personal grievances should be reported under the employer's grievance policy.

From [www.gov.uk/whistleblowing](http://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing)

### **Aims**

- A member of staff has the right, and a responsibility, to raise genuinely held concerns about any aspect of the school or the conduct of its personnel or others acting on behalf of the school. This includes abuses of power and trust by colleagues towards pupils.
- To work with other schools and the Local Authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.
- This policy is designed to ensure that genuinely held concerns are raised, and effectively addressed, by people working for The Old Hall. This policy also covers other people who come into the school in an official role i.e. pupils on placement and outside agencies.

#### A genuinely held concern might be about the following:

- Illegal and unacceptable behaviour, for example a member of staff having a physical relationship with a pupil
- Misuse of school budgets
- Poor standards of physical and emotional care
- The "cover up" of a serious incident.

No one exercising his or her right to raise a concern in the public interest under this policy will be penalised for doing so. Any attempt to victimise staff, volunteers and pupils for raising genuine concerns, or to prevent such concerns being raised, will be regarded as a disciplinary matter. Under this policy managers are required to act promptly and appropriately when concerns have been raised.

### **Who should a member of staff contact?**

Everyone is encouraged to talk directly to their line manager about concerns without having to necessarily involve outside bodies.

HOWEVER, ALL CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS MUST BE REPORTED TO one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

At Old Hall these are:

- Mr Nick Rothwekk DSL & Deputy Head
- Mrs Alison Hartland-Griffiths DDSL & Head of EYFS
- Mrs Aimee Williams DDSL & SEND Co-ordinator

Within the school the Head can always be directly contacted by any of her staff. Similarly any member of staff can also directly contact the Chairman of Governors if the concern is about the Head.

Staff are required under Independent Schools Inspectorate, to have access to the following address and phone number:

- Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI): CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA.
- Telephone: 020 7600 0100 Email: [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)

If concerns are related to a child protection issue: Telephone: 020 7710 9900 or Email:

- [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

Staff can also “whistleblow” to members of the school’s Governing Body.

### **Raising a Concern**

People who contact another person in order to whistleblow must be prepared for their concerns to be taken further. No one can expect their concerns to be kept confidential but they can be reassured that they will not be victimised subsequently. Whistle blowing is rooted in the need to keep people safe, it is not about getting other people into trouble.

All raised concerns are investigated and every effort is made to ensure confidentiality for all parties.

#### **Stage 1**

All concerns should be made in person or in writing.

The person raising the concern may wish to receive help from the local authority or from their trade union.

At any future meeting the employee may be accompanied by a colleague.

#### **Stage 2**

Within 10 working days the person with whom the concern has been registered acknowledges receipt in writing.

The letter will state the following:

1. How the concern will be dealt with
2. How long it will take to provide a final response
3. Information on employee support services

### **Stage 3**

After initial enquiries have been conducted, a decision will be made if an investigation should take place.

The investigation will be either:

- An internal investigation
- A referral to the police
- A referral to the Council Auditor
- An external independent enquiry

### **Stage 4**

The employee will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation by the Governing Body.

The employee has the right to take their concern to an independent body if they feel it has not been addressed adequately. There is an independent authority on whistleblowing:

- the Public Concern at Work – [www.pcaw.org.uk](http://www.pcaw.org.uk)

The above website contains all relevant legislation, policy and publications for those concerned about malpractice. It provides free, professional and personal advice, a campaign to change policy, and provides a consultancy to employers.