



Newlands CofE School Federation

A partnership of Shere and Clandon Schools

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Encourage individuals to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that concerns will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately, and treated confidentially.
- Ensure all staff know how to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing within the Federation.
- Set out clear procedures for how the Federation will respond to whistleblowing concerns.
- Inform all staff of the protection available to them when raising a whistleblowing concern.
- Assure staff they will not suffer victimisation or detriment for raising legitimate concerns, even if those concerns turn out to be mistaken. However, vexatious or malicious concerns may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

It applies to:

- All Federation employees.
- Contractors and self-employed consultants providing services on a personal basis.
- Agency workers.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on:

- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Government guidance on whistleblowing in maintained schools
- The Department for Education's guidance on whistleblowing procedures

3. Definition of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the reporting of concerns about wrongdoing that is in the public interest. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Criminal offences e.g. fraud or corruption
- Endangering the health and safety of pupils or staff
- Breach of a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Financial mismanagement or breach of procedures
- Attempts to cover up wrongdoing
- Environmental damage

A whistleblower is someone who raises genuine concerns about the above issues.

Personal employment-related concerns, such as bullying or harassment, usually fall under the Federation's grievance procedures, not whistleblowing. If a concern relates to an individual's own employment contract, it should be raised as a grievance.

For further advice on whether an issue is a whistleblowing matter or a grievance, staff may contact:

- Their trade union representative
- Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), a charity offering confidential advice:
Advice Line: 0203 117 2520. Website: [Protect – Speak up, stop harm](#)

4. Raising a Whistleblowing Concern

4.1 When to Raise a Concern

Staff should raise a concern if they have reason to believe that:

- Illegal activity, statutory breaches, or unsafe practices have occurred
- Health and safety is at risk
- There is evidence of financial mismanagement
- There has been an attempt to cover up wrongdoing

4.2 Who to Report to

- Concerns should normally be raised with the Executive Headteacher.
- If the concern is about the Executive Headteacher, or the staff member believes the Executive Headteacher may be involved, the concern should be raised with the Chair of Governors.

The Federation encourages staff to raise concerns internally, but staff may also report directly to a prescribed external body.

A list of prescribed bodies is available here: [Whistleblowing for employees: What is a whistleblower – GOV.UK](#). Staff may also contact Protect for independent advice before reporting externally. [Protect – Speak up stop harm – Whistleblowing Homepage](#)

4.3 How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should be submitted in writing where possible and include:

- Names, dates, locations, and specific details
- Any supporting evidence available

- Details of any personal interest in the matter

5. Federation Procedure for Responding to a Whistleblowing Concern

5.1 Initial Response

When a concern is raised, the recipient (Executive Headteacher or Chair of Governors) will:

- Arrange to meet the whistleblower within a reasonable timeframe. The whistleblower may bring a trade union representative or colleague to this meeting.
- Gather as much information as possible. If the issue is not of a whistleblowing nature, it will be redirected to the appropriate procedure (e.g. grievance).
- Reassure the whistleblower that they are protected from unfair treatment or dismissal.
- Inform the whistleblower that if the allegation is proven to be malicious or vexatious, this may lead to disciplinary action.
- Decide whether the concern requires formal investigation.

If further investigation is required:

- The recipient will arrange for the concern to be fully investigated, involving the Chair of Governors, another governor, or an external independent investigator as appropriate.
- In some cases, the police or another regulatory body may need to be informed.
- The whistleblower will be kept updated on the progress and expected timeline of the investigation.

5.2 Outcome

Following the investigation:

- A written report will be prepared detailing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome, though confidentiality may limit the level of detail that can be shared.
- If wrongdoing is confirmed, appropriate action will be taken, which may include:
 - Referral to external authorities (e.g. the local authority, the police)
 - Review of Federation policies and procedures to prevent recurrence

The Federation is committed to dealing with all whistleblowing concerns fairly, even if the outcome is not what the whistleblower hoped for.

6. Malicious or Vexatious Allegations

If a concern is raised in good faith, but no wrongdoing is found, no action will be taken against the whistleblower. However, if a concern is found to have been raised with malicious intent or is deliberately false, this may lead to disciplinary action.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy was first adopted by the Governing Body in September 2021. It will be reviewed annually.

The **Resources Committee** is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy.

- Date of last review: Summer 2026.
- Date of next review: Summer 2027.