

Whistleblowing Policy

Date Reviewed	01.2023
Reviewed By	DR
Date Of Next Review	01.2024
Version	9.1



WYCHWOOD

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Introduction:

Adults working in a school are often the first to realise that someone's behaviour is causing, or is likely to cause, harm to a child or young person. Wychwood, Oxford is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child, and expects the highest possible standards of openness. The School encourages an open working environment where staff feel empowered and able to raise concerns about any part of their employment including the behaviour of their colleagues and managers. As part of safeguarding inductions, staff are trained in what to do if they have a concern, raising the matter internally to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Director of Operations (DOO) or Safeguarding Director and externally via the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (OSCB) and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). All contact details are within the *Safeguarding Policy*.

It is important that staff are aware that if an allegation is disclosed to them of abuse, harm (or potential harm) or that a criminal offence may have taken place, they must follow the *Management of Allegations Against Staff Policy*.

Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the individual to bring matters of concern to the attention of their Line Manager, DSL or the appropriate colleague. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Reasons for whistle blowing:

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

How to raise a concern

- Initially, concerns should be raised to your immediate manager, or if your concern is regarding your manager – the Head. If your concern is regarding the Head, you should contact the Safeguarding Director, Simon Tyrrell. (*See Safeguarding Policy*)
- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner it is possible for action to be taken.
- Try to pinpoint what practice is concerning you and why.
- Approach someone you trust and who you believe will respond.
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response—don't let matters rest.
- Put your concerns in writing wherever possible so you have a record

Rights and responsibilities

All concerns will be treated in confidence and we will make every effort not to reveal the identity of anyone raising a concern in good faith. At the appropriate time, however, the member of staff may need to come forward as a witness. If a member of staff raises a concern in good faith which is then not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that person. If the investigation concludes that the member of

staff maliciously fabricated the allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against that person in line with our disciplinary procedure.

External Support

Public Concern at Work, an independent charity – can give free confidential advice about how to raise a concern about malpractice at work (020 7404 6609) www.pcaw.co.uk

NSPCC whistle-blowing helpline: 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk for staff who feel unable to raise concerns regarding child protection internally