



# Whistleblowing Policy

## 2022-2023

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<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	<b>August 2022</b>
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## **Introduction**

- Read Academy is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity and expects all staff to maintain high standards in accordance with their obligations and the school's policies and procedures.
- This Whistle-blowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable staff of the school, to raise serious concerns within the school rather than overlooking a problem or discussing it externally.
- This Policy reflects the school's current practices and applies to all individuals working at all levels of the organisation, including the senior development leaders, Head of School, members of the Leadership Team, employees, contractors, part-time and fixed-term staff who are advised to familiarise themselves with its content.
- It is provided for guidance to all members of staff at the school and the school reserves the right to amend its content at any time.
- This policy should not be used for complaints relating to staff's own personal circumstances, such as the way she/he has been treated at work. In those cases, staff should follow the Staff Grievance Procedure.

## **Aims of the policy**

- 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.
- To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.
- To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- To ensure all staff are aware that concerns will be taken seriously and treated consistently and fairly.

## **Meaning of whistle-blowing**

Whistleblowing is when a worker report suspected wrongdoing at work.

Wrong-doing includes (but is not limited to):

- ***Criminal activity***
- ***Child protection and/or safeguarding concerns.***
- ***Danger to health and safety.***
- ***Damage to the environment.***
- ***Failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements.***
- ***Financial fraud or mismanagement.***
- ***Negligence.***
- ***Breach of the school's internal policies and procedures including its Code of Conduct.***
- ***Conduct likely to damage the school's reputation.***
- ***Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.***

- *The deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.*

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above.

### **Reasons for whistleblowing**

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.

### **What stops people from whistle blowing**

- Fear of starting a chain of events which spirals out of control.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

### **How to raise a concern**

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 action can be taken.

Staff members with concerns should follow these steps:

- Line Manager / SLT
- Specified person in school (Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher)
- Chair of Senior Development Leader (Mr Sameer Abbas)
- Local Authority
- Prescribed Person or Body (e.g. Ofsted, Education Funding Agency, Children's Commissioner or NSPCC)
- alternatively contact the whistleblowing charity, 'Public Concern At Work' [www.pcaw.org.uk](http://www.pcaw.org.uk)
  
- Staff member should normally raise concerns with their immediate Line Manager/SLT. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues and who is involved. For example, if an employee believes that their immediate Line Manager is involved, she/he should approach the Headteacher.
- Concerns are best raised in writing. The sort of information required to investigate an allegation are details of the background and history to the case, names, dates, places and, where possible, the reason why the member of staff is concerned.

### **How the school will respond**

Within ten working days of a concern being received, where appropriate, the school will write to the member of staff:

- **Acknowledging that the concern has been received.**
- **Indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter (including potential timescales)**
- **Informing them whether any initial enquiries have been made.**
- **Informing them whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.**

The school will refer to the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) who advise what the best course of action will be.

#### **This could include:**

- **Investigated internally**
- **Referred to the Police**
- **Form the subject of an independent inquiry.**

In order to protect individuals and the school, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

### **How the matter can be taken further**

- Should a member of staff be unable to raise a concern with their immediate manager, the Head teacher or the Chair of SDLs, because the allegations relate to them, staff should seek independent advice from the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs). An employee should not take concerns directly to the media without first complying with this policy.

### **Confidentiality**

- Read Academy hopes that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly. However, if a member of staff wants to raise his or her concern confidentially, the school will ensure to keep his or her identity secret as far as it is possible to do so when following this policy and procedure.
- If it is necessary for anyone investigating that member of staff's concern to know the 'whistle-blower's identity, the school will discuss this with the member of staff first.
- The school does not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if the school cannot obtain further information.
- Whistle-blowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should speak to the Headteacher (Gulam Abbas Hussain) or the Deputy Headteacher (Hanila Ali Syed) and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality.

If in any doubt, staff can seek advice from Public Concern at Work, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline.

***Their contact details are: Public Concern at Work***

***(Independent whistle blowing charity)***

***Helpline: 020 7404 6609 E-mail: [whistle@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:whistle@pcaw.co.uk) Website: [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)***

### **Protection and Support for whistle-blowers**

- It is understandable that ‘whistle-blowers’ are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern in good faith. Detrimental treatment would include dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern.
- If a member of staff believes that he or she has suffered any such treatment, he or she should inform the Headteacher immediately. If the matter is not resolved the member of staff should raise it formally.
- Staff must not threaten or retaliate against ‘whistle-blower’s’ in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.
- 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 Headteacher.

### **Anonymous Allegations**

- Staff are encouraged to put their name to an allegation. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information and it is also more difficult to establish whether allegations are credible.
- Anonymous allegations will be considered at the discretion of the school’s management team. The factors to be taken into account would include: the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

### **Untrue/Unfounded Allegations**

- If a member of staff makes an allegation where she/he has a genuine concern, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that staff. If, however, it has been concluded that a staff member has made malicious allegations, or with a view to personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against that member of staff.
- Following investigation, allegations may be confirmed as unfounded. This outcome will be notified to the member of staff who raised the concern, who will be informed that the matter has been concluded and that it should not be raised again unless new evidence becomes available.

### **Concerns against Governors/Chairman of Governors**

- If a concern against a Governor is received, then this will be treated in the same way as any other concern. It will receive the same serious consideration.
- The concern will be raised by the Headteacher with the Chairman of Governors who will decide how it should be dealt with.

- If the concern is against the Chairman of Governors then in such circumstances, the concern will be taken directly to the Head of School who will decide in consultation with the leadership team how it should be dealt with.

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### **External disclosures**

- In most cases staff should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.
- Read Academy strongly encourages staff to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. (*The independent whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern.*)
- The law allows staff to raise a concern in good faith with a third party. However, staff are encouraged to report such concerns internally first. Staff should contact the Headteacher (Gulam Abbas Hussain) or the Deputy Headteacher (Hanila Ali Syed).

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **The School Governing Body/Senior Development Leaders:**

- Annual review of the policy.
- Approving amendments to the policy.

#### **Managers/Leaders:**

- To undertake investigations without undue delay.
- To maintain confidentiality.

#### **Staff Members:**

- To raise issues of concern appropriately and responsibly.

#### **Others:**

The school is committed to encouraging all individuals, including non-school employees to raise serious concerns with the organisation. Whilst we would seek always to protect the anonymity of individuals raising concerns in good faith, the Whistle blowing Policy does not protect employees of external organisations in the same way as school employees.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Headteacher will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy/procedure.



## Whistleblowing Record Form for Staff

(Please complete and return to a member of SLT)

**Your name:**

**Date:**

**Please give details of your complaint** include names of those committing wrongdoings, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. (Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter).

**Recipient of form:**

**Action taken:**

**Date:**



## Whistleblowing Record Form

(This form should be used in the event of an informal parent complaint (either via email, phone call or in person). Please complete and return to a member of SLT

**Your name:**

**Date:**

**Please give details of your complaint** include names of those committing wrongdoings, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. (Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter).

**Recipient of form:**

**Action taken:**

**Date:**