

9.1.1 SALESIAN COLLEGE WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Salesian College Whistleblowing Policy should protect staff members who report colleagues they believe are doing something wrong or illegal, or who are neglecting their duties. The College whistleblowing policy has a key role to play in safeguarding children.

Salesian College has a culture of safety and raising concerns. It also strives to have a culture of valuing staff and of reflective practice. Such cultures are essential if staff are to feel confident to raise issues regarding their colleagues. Since *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018) applies to all schools, this means all schools must have a whistleblowing policy.

The legal background relating to 'whistleblowing' is covered by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which affords protection against dismissal or any lesser penalty where an employee discloses in good faith, with reasonable grounds for belief in the disclosure, certain information relating to:

- failure to comply with legal obligations;
- miscarriages of justice;
- criminal offences;
- danger to Health and Safety;
- damage to the environment;
- and concealment of evidence relating to the above.
- This policy sets out the agreed procedures that should be followed where employees have concerns about what they regard as such impropriety or neglect of duty at the School. Such breaches of acceptable standards may be in relation to ethical or professional standards, as well as the School's expectations on money, gifts, hospitality, health and safety and welfare, equal opportunities, relationships and outside interests. The Code of Conduct gives greater detail.
- This procedure should be used where your concern is about the consequences for other employees or the public. If your concern is about yourself being disadvantaged by the action or failure to take action of others, then that should be pursued through the School's Grievance Procedure

Whistleblowing is when a worker reports suspected wrongdoing at work. Wrong-doing covered by this 'public interest disclosure' includes:

- someone's health and safety is in danger;
- damage to the environment;
- a criminal offence;

- not obeying the law;
- covering up wrongdoing;
- misusing public funds; (and in schools)
- actions that negatively affect the welfare of children

The Whistleblowing Policy should be considered in conjunction with the following other policies/documents:

- 2.12 Staff Code of Conduct
- 2.24 Staff Grievance Policy
- 9.1 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (Appendix G)
- 9.2.2 Child on Child Abuse Policy

Where staff have concerns they should aim to report it internally first before using an external 'prescribed person or body'. Making a report to an external person may only be undertaken where the staff member thinks the school will cover it up, would treat them unfairly if they complained or have raised the matter before, but the concern hasn't been dealt with.

Schools should identify a member of staff and a governor to receive concerns of this kind; they should also identify the local authority contact person.

Staff members with concerns should follow these steps:

- Line Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher
- Specified person (or Safeguarding governor) in school
- Local Authority
- Union or Professional Association
- Prescribed Person or Body (eg. Ofsted, Education Funding Agency, Children's Commissioner or NSPCC)
- alternatively contact the whistleblowing charity, 'Public Concern At Work' www.pcaw.org.uk

Principles of Whistleblowing

The principles in the report are grouped into themes which are set out below. Working Together to Safeguard Children is expecting these principles to be particularly evident in the safeguarding systems in schools and colleges.

The aspects set out in Theme 1, will fit appropriately into the ethos and values section of a school's policies, not only safeguarding. Theme 2 should be included in the policy section that describes how concerns will be dealt with, particularly the need for prompt investigation.

In schools, Theme 3 will emphasise training and communication so that staff understand what the whistleblowing policy is there for and what concerns are covered. Where a school has a strongly hierarchical approach, a 'Freedom To Speak Up' Guardian may ensure that all staff feel that they have someone to speak to without approaching a senior manager.

Theme 4 develops the idea of ensuring that no-one feels unable to raise concerns, but recognises that some staff may feel they will not be listened to.

Principles of Whistleblowing

Theme 1 – the need for culture change

- culture of safety and learning
- raising concerns
- culture free from bullying
- culture of visible leadership
- value staff who raise concerns
- culture of reflective practice

Theme 2 – the need for improved handling of cases

- informal and formal raising and resolution of concerns,
- prompt, swift, proportionate, and blame free investigation
- mediation and dispute resolution

Theme 3 – the need for measures to support good practice

- support to those raising concerns
- introduction of a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
- training for every member of staff about raising concerns and handling them
- transparency accountable
- external review
- regulatory action

Theme 4 – the need for particular measures for vulnerable groups

- Schools should also recognise that temporary staff, part-time staff, volunteers and students may find it harder to raise their concerns.

Further Information

Freedom to Speak Up Report:

freedomtospeakup.org.uk

Whistleblowing procedure for maintained schools

www.gov.uk/whistleblowing-procedure-for-maintained-schools

Whistleblowing

www.gov.uk/whistleblowing

Whistleblowing to Ofsted about safeguarding in local authority children's services (April 2014) www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/ofstedwhistleblowing

Whistleblowing Reports to the PCAW in 2013 www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/pcaw2013

This policy was reviewed and approved in October 2022

KCSIE 2022 AND HAMPSHIRE GUIDANCE

While the school has a separate whistleblowing policy, this is a summary sheet that outlines the process when there is a concern that safeguarding issues have not been reported or followed correctly. This does not replace the Whistleblowing Policy and should be read in conjunction with the school policy.

Whistleblowing is a term that is used when staff want to report a concern within their organisation that involves their manager or a person senior to them in the organisation, which may prevent them from following the normal reporting systems.

There are a limited number of areas that can be called Whistleblowing, and the policy protects staff from being punished for raising concerns.

Within Salesian College, the Headteacher is the senior manager and responsible for all staff. If you are concerned that any member of staff within the school is not following safeguarding processes or behaving in a way that is placing children at risk, you should in the first place make the Headteacher aware.

If your concern is about the Headteacher then you would raise this directly with the Chair of Governors or through the Clerk to the Governing Body as an intermediary.

If you would prefer to raise your concerns outside of the school then you are able to contact the NSPCC whistleblowing line on 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk for national organisations or make contact with Hampshire County Council.

If you believe that a member of the school staff is harming a child (an allegation) and this has been reported to the Headteacher and no action has been taken, or the member of staff you have concerns about is the Headteacher, then you are able to contact the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) on 01962 876364 or child.protection@hants.gov.uk. Or one can complete a downloadable form on the Hampshire Council website

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren/allegations>

If you believe that a child is being abused by individuals outside of the school, then you are able to make a referral to Children's Social Care by calling 0300 555 1384 (office hours) or 0300 555 1373 (outside of office hours)

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