



MAYVILLE
HIGH SCHOOL
Founded in 1897

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

The School is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity and expects all staff to maintain high standards. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the School, including Trustees.

Any member of staff, a volunteer or contractor at the School is both entitled and encouraged, without any fear of reprisal, to report and disclose any action or information which they reasonably consider relates to:

- fraud,
- malpractice,
- health and safety,
- criminal offences,
- miscarriages of justice,
- a failure to comply with legal obligations,
- inappropriate behaviour or unethical conduct,

or any concealment of such action or information.

The policy also provides, if necessary, details for concerns to be raised outside of the organisation.

Members of staff must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern, including low-level concerns, to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult, this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Aims

The School's policy on whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that it:

- will not tolerate malpractice, prejudice or discrimination;
- encourages staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, as appropriate;
- encourages a culture of safety and of raising concerns;
- encourages a culture of valuing staff and of reflective practice;
- respects the confidentiality of staff raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively;
- will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate;

- will only invoke the School's disciplinary procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations. The policy seeks to reassure staff that they can raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisal, even if they turn out to be mistaken; and
- will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all members of staff.

Scope of this policy and procedure

Individuals should not use the whistleblowing procedure to raise concerns relating to their own personal circumstances, such as the way they have been treated at work. In those cases, the Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Policy should be used, as appropriate.

This procedure is to enable members of staff to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the School.

Malpractice is not easily defined; however, it includes allegations of

- fraud,
- financial irregularities,
- corruption,
- bribery,
- dishonesty,
- acting contrary to the staff code of conduct,
- criminal activities, or failing to comply with a legal obligation,
- a miscarriage of justice, or
- creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment (negligence).

A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to suspected malpractice within the School. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected malpractice affecting any of the School's activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this procedure.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- general guidance on whistleblowing can be found via [Advice on Whistleblowing](#); and
- the [NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline](#) is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- Protect, an independent whistleblowing charity, previously known as Public Concern at Work (helpline: 020 3117 2502, [Online webform](#), website: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>).

With due regard to KCSIE all staff are asked to read the Whistleblowing Policy on admission to the school as part of their induction procedure.

Confidentiality

Disclosures will be handled sensitively and in confidence. Wherever possible, the identity of the whistleblower will not be disclosed without their consent. However, anonymity may limit the investigation's effectiveness. If it is necessary for anyone investigating the concern to know your identity, this will be

discussed with you.

If there is evidence of criminal activity then the Police will in all cases be informed.

We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should discuss this with the Head or a Trustee and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt you can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are set out above.

Internal Whistleblowing Process

If, following consideration of the circumstances together with the information and guidance contained in this policy and other relevant documents, you wish to report a whistleblowing concern, you should follow the procedures outlined below:

Stage one

Procedure: You should disclose the suspected wrongdoing first to your Line Manager. In the event that your Line Manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you should disclose your concern to a member of the SMT. In the event that a member of the SMT is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you should proceed directly to Stage Two of this procedure. Staff are encouraged to put their concerns in writing, outlining any relevant background and history and providing any relevant details such as names, dates and places.

Response: You can expect a response detailing to whom the disclosure has been notified or any action taken within seven days of your Line Manager/ member of SMT becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage two

Procedure: If no response is forthcoming after seven days from your Line Manager/ member of SMT, if you are not satisfied with the way in which your concern has been handled or if a member of SMT is involved in the suspected wrongdoing you should notify the Head.

Response: You can expect a response detailing any action taken within seven days of the Head becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage three

Procedure: If no such response is forthcoming after seven days from the Head, if you are not satisfied with the way in which your concern has been handled or if the Head is involved in the suspected wrongdoing you should inform the Chair of Trustees of the disclosure (trustees@mayvillehighschool.net).

Escalating the Concern Externally

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in school. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

However, where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff shall have a right of access to an external person/body. This may include (depending on the subject matter of the disclosure):

- the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI),
- the Department for Education (DfE),
- Ofsted (for Early Years Foundation Stage - EYFS - concerns),

- HMRC,
- the Audit Commission,
- the Health and Safety Executive and/or
- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

It will very rarely, if ever, be appropriate for you to alert the media.

It should be noted that under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where a member of staff may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the individual reasonably believes :-

- that exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- that the School would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- where they believe they would be victimised by the School; or
- where the Secretary of State has ordered it.

We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect (see above), operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern.

Malicious Accusations

False, malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be dealt with under the School's *Staff disciplinary and Grievance Procedure*.

Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation

It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

No member of staff will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine and legitimate concern, providing that they do so in good faith and following the Whistleblowing procedures. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Head or Deputy immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you may raise it formally using the Staff disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action.

This Whistleblowing Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Staff disciplinary and Grievance Procedure

["Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges"](#)