



CANNOCK CHASE HIGH SCHOOL

A C H I E V E M E N T F O R A L L

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Introduction

This Policy enables you to report, confidentially, serious concerns about any aspects of the school's work which you suspect involves criminal behaviour or other specific forms of malpractice – damage to the environment, for example, or action that threatens health and safety. You should disclose information that you reasonably believe is in the public interest. This is called a qualifying disclosure and you are protected from suffering any detriment, victimisation or bullying and harassment as a result of your disclosure.

This Policy describes the circumstances in which concerns can be reported confidentially or 'disclosed', and the conditions that must be met.

If an employee is concerned that his or her own contract of employment has been, or is likely to be, breached, the employee should use the school's Grievance Policy to raise a complaint.

This Policy covers all employees of the school, contractors, agency staff and any partners.

Making a Disclosure

To make a disclosure, either telephone or write to the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors. If writing, mark the envelope: 'PIDA – Strictly Private and Confidential'.

Do not e-mail the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, as e-mail is not a secure medium and must not be used.

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of your disclosure in writing, within 5 working days. They will also gather further information if need be, including by personal interview, at which you can be accompanied by an official of your trade union or professional association, or by a work colleague.

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will determine what further action, if any, is needed, which may comprise:

- internal investigation;
- report to the Police;
- report to external audit;
- independent enquiry;
- any combination of the above.

Throughout the process the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will keep you informed on progress and (subject to legal constraints) the eventual outcome.

Further Appeal

If, at the end of the process, you or any other person covered by the Act, are not satisfied with how a disclosure has been dealt with, you may refer to one of the regulatory bodies/ other external agencies. These may include HM Revenue and Customs, the Health & Safety Executive or the Serious Fraud Office.

As with internal disclosure, before referring to one of these bodies you should consider: do I honestly and reasonably believe that my concerns are well founded and that any allegations I am about to make are substantially true?

Legal Protection

Exceptionally, the Act offers protection in respect of disclosures made to people or bodies but only when, all things considered, it is reasonable to do this and the disclosure is not made for personal gain. In addition, one of the following must apply:

- The matter must have been raised already with the employer and/or relevant regulatory body; or
- You reasonably believed that you would be victimised if you raised the matter internally; or
- There is no relevant regulatory body, and you reasonably believed that evidence was likely to be concealed or destroyed.
- Your concern is of an "exceptionally serious" nature, which is for you to determine.

Confidentiality

The school will treat your disclosure in confidence, and only reveal your identity if absolutely necessary (e.g. if required in connection with legal action).

Frivolous/Malicious Claims

If you make a disclosure that the school determines to be frivolous, malicious, or made for personal gain this may result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

Victimisation

Anyone who harasses or victimises someone who makes a protected disclosure will be subject to disciplinary action.

Further Advice and Information

If you belong to a recognised trade union or professional association you can get support and assistance from them or if you prefer to seek independent, external advice this can be obtained from the charity Public Concern at Work or the Audit Commission at:

Public Concern at Work Suite 306, 16 Baldwins Gardens London EC1N 7RJ
Helpline: 020 7404 6609, E-mail: helpline@pcaw.co.uk

Audit Commission, 1 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PN
Telephone: 020 7828 1212, E-mail: enquiries@audit-commission.gov.uk

Further background information on this topic is also available on the following Websites:

www.dti.gov.uk

www.acas.org.uk

www.lg-employers.gov.uk

www.audit-commission.gov.uk

www.pcaw.co.uk

Date for Review: _____