



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO MILLFIELD, MILLFIELD PREP SCHOOL AND MILLFIELD PRE-PREP SCHOOL (INCLUDING EYFS) AND MILLFIELD ENTERPRISES, TOGETHER REFERRED TO IN THIS POLICY AS “MILLFIELD” OR “THE SCHOOL”.

This policy and procedure has been adopted by the school to enable and encourage members of staff to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about the safeguarding of pupils' welfare, fraud, malpractice, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriage of justice, and failure to comply with legal obligations, inappropriate behaviour or unethical conduct. It is not to be used to question financial or business decisions or opinions taken by the School and should not be used to raise any other concerns that have already been addressed through the Grievance, complaint or disciplinary policies. Individuals who disclose any concerns outside of this policy, as set out below, may not be protected under the Whistleblowing Act.

Millfield's policy on whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that the school:

- Has safeguarding children at the centre of its ethos.
- Has a culture of safety for raising concerns, valuing staff and of reflective practice.
- Will not tolerate malpractice.
- Respects the confidentiality of employees 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 invoke the school's disciplinary policy and procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations.
- Will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all employees.

Procedure

This procedure is separate from the school's adopted procedures regarding grievances. Employees should not use the whistleblowing procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation (for example bullying, discrimination, harassment).

This procedure is to enable employees to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the school, whether related to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils, the conduct of staff or other matters, during the course of their employment, these concerns should be in the public's interest. This means it must affect others, for example pupils or the general public. This policy also covers those providing a service to the School or where an organisation is working in partnership with 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.

Confidentiality

Employees who wish to raise a concern under this procedure are entitled to have the matter treated confidentially and their name will not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator of malpractice without their prior approval. It may be appropriate to preserve confidentiality that concerns are raised orally rather than in writing, although employees are encouraged to express their concern in writing wherever possible. If it is not possible to maintain confidentiality, the employee will be informed and if they wish to retract their concern, they may do so with immediate effect. If there is evidence of criminal activity the Police will be informed.

The Investigation

Employees will be at liberty to express their concerns to their line manager. If this is not appropriate, then they should contact the Head of HR or Finance Director. Should the allegation be of a safeguarding nature, this concern should be raised directly with the Head. If the allegation is concerning the Head of Human Resources it should be raised with either the Head or Finance Director, and where this concerns the Head or Finance Director it should be raised with the Staff Liaison Governor in the first instance (via the Clerk to Governors).

If the concern requires further information or clarification, the Investigating Officer will conduct a meeting prior to the investigation taking place. The employee may bring with them a Trade Union representative or colleague to any meetings under this policy.

Any concerns raised will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and appropriate corrective action will be pursued. The employee making the allegation will be kept informed of progress wherever possible and, subject to third party rights, will be informed of the outcome in writing.

An employee who is not satisfied that his/her concern is being properly dealt with will have a right to raise it in confidence with the Head of Human Resources. If this action would be inappropriate, then it should be raised with the Finance Director or the Staff Liaison Governor (via the Clerk to Governors), or a prescribed person or body.

An annual report of whistleblowing incidents will be received by the Governors Audit, Compliance and Risk Committee.

External Procedures

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

- It is justified by exceptionally serious circumstances.
- The school would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence.
- He or she would be victimised by the school.
- The Secretary of State has ordered it.

If you tell an external body or person, it must be one that deals with the issue you are raising.

Malicious Accusations

False, malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be treated as gross misconduct and dealt with under the schools' Disciplinary and Competency Procedures.

Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation

No employee will suffer a detriment or be disciplined for raising a genuine and legitimate concern, even if there has been a genuine mistake in their concern, providing that they do so in good faith and follow the whistleblower procedure.

In certain circumstances employees are protected under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1998. Qualifying disclosure are disclosures of information where the employee reasonably believes (and it is in the public interest) that one or more of the following matters is either happening, has taken place, or is likely to happen in the future:

- A criminal offence
- The breach of a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment
- Abuse of power
- Discrimination in the provision of education
- Loss of income, reputation or standing of the School
- Deliberate attempt to conceal any of the above

If you report your concern to the media, in most cases, you will lose your whistleblowing law rights.

Support and Advice

If the employee is unsure on any of the above and would like further advice and Support after speaking to HR, they should speak to their Trade Union representative or contact the [Public Concern at Work charity](#) or phone 020 3117 2520

Policy owner	Head of HR
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