



CHINTHURST SCHOOL  
TRADITIONAL VALUES | MODERN TEACHING

# Chinthurst Preparatory School

## Whistle-Blowing Policy

*This policy fully incorporates the recommendations of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' as published by the Department for Education – July 2015*

Reviewed by TB/SN/WB - September 2016

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## 1.1 – What is Whistle-Blowing?

1.1.1 - Whistle-blowing is the means by which a member of staff can raise concern about a colleague in good faith without fear of repercussion.

1.1.2 - Within the school community at Chinthurst there is an ethos of trust and respect. It is possible for staff to discreetly approach a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) to share misgivings or unease about the behaviour of a colleague before there is a definite cause for concern. This may pre-empt the need for whistle-blowing as it creates an opportunity for staff support and guidance or for other preventative measures to be taken.

1.1.3 – Suspected wrong-doing which could lead to whistle-blowing may include:

- criminal activity
- child protection and/or safeguarding concerns (**please refer to the school’s Safeguarding policy for the reporting procedure in this instance**)
- miscarriages of justice
- 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

## 1.2 – The aims of Chinthurst School’s Whistle-Blowing Policy

1.2.1 – Chinthurst School has adopted this policy and the accompanying procedure on whistleblowing to enable members of staff to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about the above elements. The policy also provides if necessary, for such concerns to be raised outside the organisation in a clear and orderly fashion.

1.2.3 - In accordance with Lord Nolan’s Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the School’s policy on whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that the School:

- Will not tolerate malpractice;
- 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 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 members of staff.

## 1.3 – School procedure to be followed

1.3.1 - 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.

1.3.2 - If staff are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy they should seek advice from the Headteacher or Deputy Headmistress. If the matter is in relation to an alleged wrongdoing by the Headteacher or Deputy Headmistress, then Staff should seek the advice of the Chair of Governors.

1.3.3 - A member of staff with a concern in relation any suspected wrong-doing will be at liberty to express their concern with the Headteacher or Deputy Headmistress. If the matter is in relation to an alleged wrongdoing by the Headteacher, then Staff should seek the advice of the Chair of Governors.

1.3.4 – 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.

1.3.5 - If the concern is against the Chairman of Governors then clearly this process cannot be followed. In such circumstances, the concern will be taken directly to the Headteacher who should decide how it will be dealt with. In normal circumstances such a concern would be referred to the Department for Education or ISI for action.

1.3.6 - Any concern raised will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and appropriate corrective action will be pursued.

**1.3.7 – A concern relating to safeguarding / child protection should be dealt with in line with the School's separate Safeguarding Policy. If there is a risk of immediate serious harm a referral should be made to children's social care immediately, in consultation with the Headmaster or an alternative Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Local Authority Designated Officer (Elizabeth Pollard) can be contacted on 01372 833321.**

**1.3.8 - Alternatively, in the case of suspected terrorism or extremism the DfE can be contacted for advice on 0207 340 7264 or counter-extremism@education.gsl.gov.uk.**

## 1.4 – Confidentiality

1.4.1 - 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.

1.4.2 - It may be appropriate to preserve confidentiality that concerns are raised orally rather than in writing, although members of staff are encouraged to express their concern in writing wherever possible.

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

## 1.5 – The Investigation

1.5.1 - Once a member of Staff has raised a concern, the School will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. The School will inform the ‘whistle-blower’ of the outcome of its assessment. The member of staff raising the concern may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

1.5.2 - No member of the 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 Whistle-blowing procedures.

1.5.3 – A thorough investigation will then be carried out by the Headmaster in co-operation with the Governing Body, with the exception of the concern being raised against either party.

1.5.4 - The School will aim to keep the member of staff informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the School from giving specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. The member of staff is required to treat any information about the investigation as strictly confidential.

1.5.5 – Once an investigation has been completed, the member of staff wherever possible will be informed of the resolution.

1.5.6 – A member of staff who is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with will have a right to raise it in confidence with the Chairman of Governors.

1.5.7 – If the School concludes that a ‘whistle-blower’ has made false allegations maliciously, in bad faith or with a view to personal gain, the ‘whistle-blower’ will be subject to disciplinary action under the School’s Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

## 1.6 – External disclosures

1.6.1 – Where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff shall have a right of access to the Chair of Governors.

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

1.6.3 – However, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for Staff to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely, if ever, be appropriate to alert the media.

1.6.4 -We strongly encourage 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.

### **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)**

1.6.5 - Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of School Staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a service provider.

1.6.6 - The law allows Staff to raise a concern in good faith with a third party, where the member of staff reasonably believes it relates mainly to their actions or something that is legally their responsibility.

1.6.7 - However, Staff are encouraged to report such concerns internally first in line with this policy.