

Harriet House School

Whistle blowing Policy

Implementation date:  
September 2015

Review date: September 2024



## **Whistleblowing Policy**

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within their setting. However, they may not express their growing concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may be just suspicion of malpractice and wrongdoing at work.

Harriet House is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, we encourage employees and others with genuine concerns about any person linked with the setting and/or others (e.g. parents/carers) to come forward and voice those concerns.

This policy document makes it clear that employees, parents/carers and others can voice their concerns without fear or reprisals. The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise such concerns within Harriet House School rather than overlooking the problem.

The procedure allows employees, parents/carers and outside agencies to raise concerns about the staff at Harriet House.

### **Aims of this policy**

This policy aims to:

- Provide avenues for you to raise genuine concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- Allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome or response;
- Reassure you that steps will be taken to protect you from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.

There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to staff's own employment, parent/carer concerns or complaints, and issues raised by outside agencies.

This Whistleblowing policy is intended to cover genuine concerns such as:

- Harriet House staff do not adhere to the policies and procedures that they have set themselves.
- Harriet House School falls below established standards of practice;
- Staff exhibiting behaviour towards children in their care that could be interpreted as improper conduct.
- Health and Safety risks being contravened at Harriet House.
- Staff contradicts Harriet House's Code of Conduct.
- Contributes to a safeguarding risk involving children in the care of Harriet House School.

### **Harassment or victimisation**

Harriet House School recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal. Harriet House School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith. However, should you feel that you have suffered harassment, either directly or indirectly as a result of raising a concern; you should refer to the Complaints Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

### **Confidentiality**

The staff at Harriet House School will do its best to protect your identity when you raise a concern. However, it must be appreciated that, in the interests of natural justice, any investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by you may be required as part of the evidence.

### **Anonymous Allegations**

You are strongly encouraged to put your name to any allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. Anonymous allegations will be considered and any action taken at the discretion of Harriet House School and in conjunction with the relevant agencies where appropriate.

In exercising this discretion, the following factors will be taken into account when considering how to deal with any allegations:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the allegation;
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from reliable sources.

### **Malicious or vexatious allegations - staff**

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make a malicious or vexatious allegation, disciplinary action may be taken against you in accordance with Harriet House School Procedures.

### **How to raise a concern (for employees)**

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with Head Teacher or Deputy Head. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and whom you think may be implicated in the malpractice. For example, if you believe that your Deputy is involved, you should approach the Head Teacher and vice-versa.

With specific regard to Safeguarding issues, that may involve a member of staff, you should initially consult with the Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead of Harriet House School. If you suspect they may be related to the issue you should contact Designated Safeguarding Lead attached to the setting. You can also contact the Social Services Referrals Department for advice and assistance. Contact details are available at the end of this policy and on staff notice boards.

Concerns are better raised in writing. You are advised to set out background and history of your concerns, giving names, dates and places, where possible, and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

The earlier you express your concern, the easier it is for Harriet House School, Social Services or the relevant DSL a to take action.

Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for initial enquiries to be made.

### **How Harriet House School will respond.**

The action taken by Harriet House will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- Be investigated internally.
- Advice sought from the local authority.
- Be referred to the Police;

Allegations referred directly to the Local Authority will be dealt with in accordance with their policies and procedures. Any person who is the subject of an allegation should, at the appropriate times, be given details of the allegation in order to respond.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation. The following process will be followed in the event of complaints:

- Harriet House will ensure that a letter is sent to confirm the receipt of the complaint.
- The complaint will then be fully investigated and within 5 days of when the complaint was first received. Harriet House endeavour to investigate all complaints in a non-discriminatory manner.
- A letter will be sent detailing how Harriet House School has dealt with the complaint.

### **How the matter can be taken further**

If the complaint has not been dealt with in a manner that is satisfactory to the employee, parent/carer or others involved, then they can contact OFSTED directly at the following address.

**Early Years OFSTED Royal Exchange Building St Ann's Square  
Manchester**

**M2 7LA**

**TEL: 0300 123 1231**

Web: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

By registering a formal complaint with OFSTED, an Officer in most cases will be sent to the Nursery to carry out a further investigation. If applicable, a report would then be sent with action points.

CONTACT DETAILS – Safeguarding Issues.

**West Berkshire Council**

**Contact Advice and Assessment Service CAAS**

West Street House

Newbury

Berkshire

RG14 1BZ

[child@westberks.co.uk](mailto:child@westberks.co.uk)

Phone: Referral via West Berkshire's CAAS Team –

01635 503190 (for professionals)

01635 503090 (parents)

At all other times contact the Out of Hours Duty Team on 01344 786543

Police call: 101 or in case of an emergency 999

Fiona Goussard - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via CAAS for allegations against staff – 01635 503190 [LADO@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@westberks.gov.uk)

Linda Curtis – Principal Education Welfare & Safeguarding Officer and Prevent link for education – 01635 519788 [linda.curtis@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:linda.curtis@westberks.gov.uk)

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