

LYCÉE INTERNATIONAL DE LONDRES WINSTON CHURCHILL

(The “School”)

Policy #22: Whistleblowing Policy (for staff)

Mission

Through a rigorous, bilingual programme and innovative methods, we educate pupils to become responsible, creative, and principled global citizens. We teach them to think critically and act ethically, to form and express their own opinions and respect those of others, to define their own life goals, and to make sense of and embrace change.

Our values are excellence, creativity, integrity, awareness and community.

In support of these aims and values we are committed to ensuring the following:

Introduction

The School has adopted this policy and the accompanying procedure on whistleblowing to enable Team members to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion, that are related to fraud, malpractice, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice, non-compliance with legal obligations, inappropriate behaviour and unethical conduct. The policy also provides for such concerns to be raised outside the organisation if necessary.

1. Scope

This procedure applies to all Team Members.

This procedure is intended to ensure that the School complies with its duty under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

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

- does not tolerate malpractice;
- respects the confidentiality of Team members raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively;
- provides the opportunity to raise concerns outside of the normal line management structure where this is appropriate;
- invokes the School's disciplinary policy and procedure in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations;
- provides a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns, which is accessible to all Team members.

2. Procedure

This procedure does not replace the Team Handbook for procedures such as the Special Complaints, the Grievance and Anti-Harassment and Bullying procedures and other specifically laid down statutory reporting procedures.

Team members should not use the whistleblowing procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation. This procedure is to enable Team members to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the School. Malpractice is not easily defined; and may include allegations pertaining to fraud, financial irregularity, corruption, bribery, dishonesty, acting contrary to the staff code of ethics, criminal activity, failure to comply with a legal obligation, miscarriage of justice, or creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment.

3. Confidentiality

The School recognises that the decision to make an allegation can be a difficult one. However, whistleblowers who make serious allegations in the reasonable belief that it is in the School's and students' best interest should follow this procedure.

All allegations will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal a whistleblower's identity unless the whistleblower otherwise requests.

If there is evidence of criminal activity or if the allegation concerns suspected harm to children the appropriate authorities will be informed immediately. If the allegation results in court proceedings then the whistleblower may have to give evidence in open court if the case is to be successful.

Anonymous Allegations

We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously, although we will make every effort to investigate anonymous disclosures. You should be aware that 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 come forward 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.

Protect, an independent whistleblowing charity, previously known as Public Concern at Work
(helpline: 020 3117 2502, email: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk, website: www.pcaw.co.uk).

4. Reporting

It is preferable for allegations to be made to the HR & Staff Wellbeing department. However, this may depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if the whistleblower believes that a member of the HR & Staff Wellbeing department is involved it would be inappropriate to raise it directly with them. The whistleblower may then make an allegation direct to any of the following:

- The Head of School
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team

If either of the above receives an allegation they will consider the allegation and may discuss it with the Head of School (if they are not involved in the allegation). The HR & Staff Wellbeing department or either/both of the above, after consideration, will discuss with the whistleblower and if they wish to proceed with the allegation will be investigated.

Whether a written or oral report is made it is important that relevant information is provided including:

- The name of the person making the allegation and a contact point.
- The background and history of the allegation (giving relevant dates and

names and positions of those who may be in a position to have contributed to the allegation).

- The specific reason for the allegation. Although someone making an allegation will not be expected to prove the truth of any allegations, they will need to provide information to the person they have reported to, to establish that there are reasonable grounds for the allegation.

The Whistleblower may be accompanied by another person of their choosing during any meetings or interviews in connection with the allegation. However, if the matter is subsequently dealt with through another procedure the right to be accompanied will at that stage be in accordance with the relevant procedure.

5. Investigation

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

The Team member making the allegation will be kept informed of progress and, whenever possible (and subject to third-party rights) will be informed of the Resolution. Where the allegation has been made internally and anonymously, obviously the School will be unable to communicate to the whistleblower what action has been taken.

A Team member who is dissatisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with will have a right to raise it in confidence with <chairofgovernors@lyceeinternational.london>.

6. External Procedures

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

Where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a Team member shall have a right of access to an external person/body. This may include (depending on the subject matter of the disclosure) HMRC, the Audit Commission, the Health and Safety Executive and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (where the disclosure relates to a child protection issue).

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 Team member may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the employee reasonably believes:

- that exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- that the School would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- that they would be victimised by the School or their colleagues 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.

7. Malicious Accusations

False, malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

8. Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation

No Team member 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.

Policy created in 2015.

Policy reviewed in:

- March 2023
- February 2023
- October 2021
- February 2018
- November 2017
- June 2016
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