



## St George's Junior School

WEYBRIDGE

### WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

This guidance is written for St George's Junior School and is in line with Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board and DfE guidance '**Keeping Children Safe in Education** (September 2016)

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and /or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. We operate a culture of openness and a willingness to discuss and report all concerns; there should be no fear of recrimination.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children who are targeted. These children need someone to safeguard their welfare.

#### **Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right**

##### **Reasons for whistle blowing**

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To prevent or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

##### **What stops people from whistle blowing**

- Starting a chain of events which spirals
- Causing disruption
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

## How to raise a concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- Approach your line manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- If your concern is about your line manager contact the Headmaster. If it concerns the Headmaster please act in accordance with the Junior School's Safeguarding Policy. If you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the Duty LADO for Independent Schools for your area at the earliest opportunity. **(0300 123 1650)** or [LADO@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@surreycc.gov.uk)
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – do not let matters rest
- Put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

## What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

## Self reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

## Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager or Senior Management.

Please note the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline can also be used if you feel uncomfortable raising concerns at school. 8am – 8pm Monday – Friday 08000280285 [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

*'Absolutely without fail-challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice, it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong.*

('Sounding the Alarm'-Barnardos)

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