Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

The Governing Body and Staff of Delamere School seek to run all aspects of school business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. In the event that members of school staff, parents, governors or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, the Governing Body of Delamere School has established the following Whistle Blowing Policy which acts as a framework to allow concerns to be raised confidentially and provides for a thorough and appropriate investigation of the matter to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Throughout this policy, the term "whistle blower" denotes the person raising the concern or making the complaint. It is not meant in a pejorative sense and is entirely consistent with the terminology used by Lord Nolan as recommended in the Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: Local Spending Bodies published in May 1996.

Delamere School is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. Delamere School recognises that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system that allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the school.

Delamere School is committed to creating a climate of trust and openness so that a person who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that the matter will be appropriately considered and resolved. The provisions of this policy apply to matters of suspected fraud and impropriety and not matters of more general grievance that would be dealt with under the School's own Grievance Procedures.

When Might the Whistle Blowing Policy Apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which Delamere School considers should be dealt with under this policy includes:

- Manipulation of accounting records and finances
- Inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- Decision-making for personal gain
- Any criminal activity
- Abuse of position
- Fraud and deceit
- Serious breaches of the School's Procedures which may advantage a particular party (for example tampering with tender documentation or failure to register a personal interest)

What Action Should the 'Whistle Blower' Take?

Delamere School encourages the 'whistle blower' to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and governors in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and give an explanation for the behaviour or activity. Delamere School has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the 'whistle blower' is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Mrs Sally Judge
Delamere School
Irlam Road
Flixton
M41 6AP Tel: 0161 747 5893

Mrs Lorraine Howells
Chair of Governors Tel: 0161 747 5893

The 'whistle blower' may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in writing to one of the above named individuals. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible.

Alternatively, if the 'whistle blower' considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise within the internal environment of the school, the matter should be directed in the first instance to the appropriate department within Trafford Council.

Trafford Council switchboard number 0161 912 2000
Trafford Council Audit & Assurance Service contact number 0161 912 1275

Trafford Council has its own procedures for dealing with such matters and will ensure every effort to respect the confidentiality of the 'whistle blower'.

The Local Authority will ensure relevant officers of the DFE are informed as appropriate. In addition information and advice can be obtained from the charity, 'Public Concern at Work'. This charity offers free legal advice in certain circumstances to people concerned about serious malpractice at work. Their literature states that matters are handled in strict confidence and without obligation. Contact details for the charity are as follows:

Telephone
Whistleblowing Advice Line: 020 7404 6609
General enquiries: 020 3117 2520
Email
UK advice line: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk

How Will the Matter be Progressed?

The individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation, the Investigating Officer(s), will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of school staff, legal or personnel advisors, the police, Trafford Council or the DFE.

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The Investigating Officer(s), possibly in conjunction with the Governing Body, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third party referral such as the police. The 'whistle blower' will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. The matter will be reported to the Governing Body and, or Trafford Council depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated.

If the 'whistle blower' is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the Investigating Officer(s), the Governing Body and, or directed to Trafford Council.

Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible Delamere School seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the 'whistle blower' and will as far as possible protect him or her from reprisals. Delamere School will not tolerate any attempt to victimise the 'whistle blower' or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

Raising unfounded malicious concerns

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious, unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary offence or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances.

Conclusion

Existing good practice within Delamere School in terms of its systems of internal control both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the School operates ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur.

This Whistle Blowing Policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of the school. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be fully investigated.

Approved: September 2021