



CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING POLICY FOR WHISTLEBLOWING

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Reviewed by - The Laurus Trust

Statement:

This Laurus Trust is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. Any employees of the Trust who have serious concerns about the Trust and/or any school within the Trust are expected to come forward and voice those concerns. They will be able to do so in confidence and without fear of reprisal.

Legislation

UK Public Disclosure Act 1998 came into force on 2nd July 1999. The Act promotes the public interest.

Scope:

This policy is additional to the existing mechanisms that exist for raising particular issues eg the grievance procedure exists for issues around employment, parental complaints are managed through the Trust's complaints procedure. Child protection issues should be directed in the first instance to the Principal Education Welfare Officer.

This procedure covers major concerns as illustrated below:

- Conduct which is an offence or breach of the law
- Disclosures relating to miscarriage of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Damage to the environment
- Unauthorised use of public funds
- Unethical conduct

Thus any serious concerns any employees have about the operation of any part of the multi academy trust or conduct of other trust staff or members of the Governing Body can be reported under this policy.

How to raise a concern:

As a first step you should normally raise concerns with your immediate manager or Head of School. However, depending on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue it may be appropriate to raise the issue with the Chair of Governors.

Concerns are best raised in writing. Staff are encouraged to use the following format:

- The background and history of the concern
- The reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation

If you are not able to put your concern in writing you should meet with the appropriate person as detailed above.

You are encouraged to put your name to your allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the Governing Body in line with corporate guidelines.

You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague or trade union representative, you may wish to bring a representative along to any meetings you may have.

The School recognises that reporting a concern can be difficult. If what you are saying is true you should have nothing to fear. If you raise a concern in good faith you will have nothing to fear.

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. However, you need to be aware that you may need to come forward as a witness. The CEO will appoint another member of the senior management team to be your welfare lead. Should your concern involve the CEO, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will make the necessary appointment.

How the school and/or Trust will respond:

The school will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting them or rejecting them.

Where appropriate the matter raised may:

- Be investigated within the school
- Be referred to the Chair of Governors
- Be referred to the Trustees
- Be referred to the police
- Form the subject of an independent enquiry

If the matter is dealt with within school, the Head of School (or another member of the management team nominated by the Head of School) or Governing Body will respond to the concern. Where there is a concern regarding a Head of School, the CEO or Executive Head Primary, as appropriate, will respond.

If you are not satisfied with any action taken or you feel it is right to take the matter outside the Academy the following are possible contacts points:

- Your solicitor
- Your trade union
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- A relevant voluntary organisation (eg Public Concern at Work 0207 404 6609)
- The Police
- The Audit Commission via a special telephone hotline – 0303 444 8330

However, please be aware that you may not necessarily be informed of the outcome of your concern.

If you do take the matter outside the Trust you should check that you do not disclose confidential information. Check with the contact point about that.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Laurus Trust's Complaints Procedure Policy.