

Whistleblowing

1. It is the policy at The Loddon School to encourage the reporting to management of all matters of concern involving a member of staff, and for persons to feel that they can do so freely and without fear of reprisals or intimidation. This reporting process can relate to observed activities, or issues that affect an individual employee. Matters of serious concern will include, but are not limited to:
 - 1.1. Professional malpractice.
 - 1.2. Abuse of a child.
 - 1.3. Criminal activities (theft/embezzlement/assault/drugs etc.)
 - 1.4. Injury or incidents to staff
2. Persons reporting such incidents can include the following:
 - 2.1. Fellow staff members (peers).
 - 2.2. Children.
 - 2.3. Family/relatives/friends of a child.
 - 2.4. Professional person acting on behalf of a child (advocate/minister of religion, etc.).
 - 2.5. Independent advocate
 - 2.6. Social Worker/other professional
 - 2.7. The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)
3. Where there is an incident or issue of serious concern, the person making the allegation must report this directly to the Principal or, if they are not available, a member of the Leadership Team. The person will be assured that appropriate enquiries will be made to establish the nature/facts of the incident, and that such enquiries will be carried out discreetly and in confidence. Wherever possible, the identity of the person reporting the incident will be kept anonymous. Consideration will be given, and if required action taken, of how to protect the member of staff raising the concern from discrimination or reprisal.
4. Where preliminary enquiries show that further investigations need to be made, the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team will inform the staff member against whom the allegations have been made. It is important no details of the nature of the allegation are shared at this stage with the member of staff.
5. Where the alleged offence is of a serious nature, the following action may be taken:
 - 5.1. The staff member at the centre of the allegation will be suspended on full pay pending the outcome of the investigation. The staff member will be informed of the necessity for this action and will be assured that, at this point, there is no inference of guilt.
 - 5.2. Report the matter to the Police and other relevant authorities to include Ofsted and the Local Authority.
 - 5.2.1. Ofsted's whistleblowing hotline: **0300 1233155** (8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday)
 - 5.2.2. Hampshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): **01962 876364**
 - 5.2.3. NSPCC National Whistleblowing line: **0808 800 5000**

Notices are displayed around the school providing staff with the above contact details for anyone who may have any concerns.

6. A full investigation will be undertaken, interviewing all parties concerned in the allegation. This may include other staff and a pupil's family, relatives and advocates as appropriate. If the concern is of a safeguarding or child protection nature, any investigation by The Loddon School may have to wait until the conclusion of an investigation by an outside agency.
7. Following completion of the investigation:
 - 7.1. If the allegations are justified the staff member concerned may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure through to summary dismissal, as appropriate. Criminal charges may be brought by the Police or other parties, depending upon the circumstances.
 - 7.2. If the allegations are not proven, consideration will be taken as whether the staff member can return to full duty.
 - 7.3. Feedback will be provided to the individual raising the concern. They should be given sufficient information to be reassured that the allegation has been appropriately addressed and concluded within the constraints of data protection principles.
8. Where the allegation is not proven, but has proven to be a malicious action on the part of the accusing party, then the accuser will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action as per the Disciplinary Procedure. This may involve discretionary re-deployment of the accuser's duties, or summary dismissal, as deemed appropriate.
9. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:
 - 9.1. Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures
 - 9.2. Complaints Policy
 - 9.3. Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Date	Summary of Changes	Signature (Chair of Committee)	Date of next review
04/06/2021	Reviewed – no changes made.		June 2022
03/05/2022	Full review. Checked contact telephone numbers Minor additions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of detail necessary when informing a member of staff of an allegation at the outset of an allegation that involves them. • The protection from discrimination for the person raising concerns. • The type of feedback a whistleblower should/should not receive. 	<i>[Emailed to trustees for agreement.]</i>	June 2023
27/09/22	Full review: Checked contact telephone numbers Deleted reference to concerns needing to be serious to fall within the confines of this policy.	<i>See PECT minutes (10/10/22).</i>	September 2023

09/10/23	Full Review: Updated telephone number of LADO	<i>See PECT minutes (11.23)</i>	September 2024
02/08/24	Review – no changes made.		September 2025