

Hampden Gurney Primary School Whistle Blowing Policy

Updated October 2020

Our vision:

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Matthew 7: 7

Our school vision is deeply rooted in the theology and Biblical teachings of Matthew 7:7 which speaks of the importance of prayer as a way of developing an enriched life and personal relationship with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

At the heart of our school community is a commitment to prayer and worship. Our curriculum provides children with a thirst for knowledge and wisdom, a high level of challenge and a deep understanding that we are all equal and made in the image of God. Our relationships with each other, our local community and global companions leads us to want to care and serve others.

Introduction

The staff and governors of Hampden Gurney 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, Hampden Gurney School has established the following whistle blowing policy, or code of practice, 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. This policy takes into account the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects employees who report wrongdoing within the workplace.

Hampden Gurney Primary School is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. The school recognises that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system which 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.

Hampden Gurney Primary 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 which would be dealt with under the school's grievance procedures.

When might the whistle blowing policy apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which Hampden Gurney Primary 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 school procedures which may advantage a particular party (for example tampering with tender documentation, failure to register a personal interest)

What action should the *whistleblower* take?

Hampden Gurney 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.

Hampden Gurney Primary School has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the whistleblower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Name and Position Contact Details

Evelyn Chua, Headteacher (020 7723 7482)

Brian Hilton, Chairman of Governors (01580819049)

David Wilson – Triborough HR Adviser (020 7641 2882)

The LADO- LADO@Westminster.gov.uk

The *whistle blower* may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in written form marked private and confidential and addressed 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 Triborough . The Triborough has its own procedures for dealing with such matters and will ensure every effort to respect the confidentiality of the *whistle blower*. The Triborough will ensure relevant officers of the Department for Children, Schools and Families are informed as appropriate.

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, the Department for Children, Schools and Families or/and the Triborough.

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. Depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated, the matter will be reported to the governing body and the Triborough.

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 the Triborough.

Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible Hampden Gurney Primary School seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the *whistle blower* and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals. The 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 Hampden Gurney 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 actioned. This policy will be reviewed in line with changes from the Triborough and the DfE.

Date: October 2020

Review date: September 2022