

Whistleblowing Policy (Summer School)

Purpose of the policy

Bede's wishes to ensure that an environment exists where staff can always raise their concerns and be confident that they will be dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate manner. However, Bede's also recognises that there may be instances where a more formal process is needed to make sure that staff can raise major concerns that are not covered by other policies.

Who does this Policy apply to?

This policy applies to all employees and officers of Bede's. Other individuals performing functions in relation to the School, such as contractors and agency workers, are also able to use it.

Principles

- Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work.
- Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the individual who raised the concern.
- No individual will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure providing that they do so in good faith. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for promotion or training of the individual will not be prejudiced because he/she has raised a legitimate concern.
- Victimisation of an individual for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, workers should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- The School's disciplinary policy and procedure will be invoked in the case of false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations.

Background

Employment legislation governs the making of disclosures concerning workplace activities and is intended to protect employees who blow the whistle on bad practice from being subject to any detriment or from being unfairly dismissed as a result. They are called 'qualifying disclosures'. All types of wrongdoing are included whether they are acts committed by fellow employees, faults in School procedures or oversights which should be rectified. A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by an employee or worker who has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed;
- something that is against school rules or policies;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an act creating risk to health and safety;
- an act causing damage to the environment;
- a break of any other legal obligation;
- or concealment of any of the above

is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. It is not necessary for you to have proof that such an act is being, has been or is likely to be committed – a reasonable belief is sufficient. The employee or worker has no responsibility for investigating the matter – it is Bede's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

Safeguarding

Nothing within this policy is intended to prevent staff from complying with their statutory obligations in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2016). In particular:

- a. **Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy:** You should raise any initial safeguarding concerns about a child with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- b. **Safeguarding - member of staff:** You should raise any concerns about another staff member with the Principal, or if the concern is about the Principal, with the Senior School Headmaster (without first notifying the Principal).
- c. **Whistleblowing Policy:** You should follow this procedure to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices at the School or potential failures by the School or staff to properly safeguard the welfare of pupils if you are concerned that the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are not being followed correctly.
- d. **Children's Social Care:** In exceptional circumstances, or if at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care immediately.

Grievances

You should not use this policy to raise a complaint relating to your personal circumstances in the workplace. The Grievance Procedure should be used in all cases.

Raising a concern

Stage one

Procedure: You should disclose the suspected wrongdoing first to your Line Manager. In the event that your Line Manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you shall be entitled to proceed directly to Stage Two of this procedure.

Response: You can expect a response detailing to whom the disclosure has been notified or any action taken within 10 days of your Line Manager becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage two

Procedure: If no response is forthcoming after 10 days or if your Line Manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing you shall be entitled to notify the Principal or Assistant Principal as appropriate.

Response: You can expect a response detailing any action taken within 5 days of the Head / Deputy Head /Bursar becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage three

Procedure: If no such response is forthcoming you should inform the Senior School Headmaster of the disclosure.

Stage four

Outside body: If you do not receive a response within 10 days you shall be entitled to notify a relevant and appropriate body outside the School which may include:

- the Local Authority Designated Officer;
- Children's Social Care;

- the Health and Safety Executive;
- the Environment Agency;
- the Information Commissioner;
- the Department for Education (DfE);
- the Police;
- the Charity Commission;
- The British Council;

Bypassing the procedure: In extreme circumstances you will have the right to raise your concern directly with a relevant and appropriate outside body without first having followed the stages above. This may however cause damage to the School and its reputation as well as constitute a breach of your own duty of confidentiality towards the School and this action should only be taken in extreme circumstances and after careful thought.

Extreme circumstances: The School will consider extreme circumstances exist where you have a reasonable belief that: the School will subject you to detriment if you inform your Line Manager in accordance with Stage one above or if you inform the Principal/Assistant Principal in accordance with Stage two or you inform the Senior School Headmaster in accordance with Stage three; a cover-up is being mounted by the School; or a disclosure made previously to your Line Manager or the Principal/Assistant Principal or the Senior School Headmaster in accordance with the stages above has not prompted a satisfactory response.

The media: Even where extreme circumstances are thought to exist, you should under no circumstances approach a commercial body or the media with details of the suspected wrongdoing. If you approach any such body and / or where your concern is disclosed for personal gain, the School may consider this to be gross misconduct and immediate disciplinary action may be taken against you.