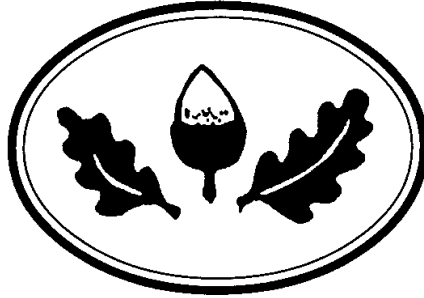


# OLD OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mellitus Street, London W12 0AS



## WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

THIS WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY WAS APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY  
THE FULL GOVERNING BODY ON: 22/02/2023

Signed:

Co Headteacher: J. Brown Date: 22.2.23

Co Headteacher: K. Beardsworth Date: 22.2.23

Chair of Governors: Dr. G Welch Date: 22.2.23

# Old Oak Primary School - Whistleblowing Policy

## February 2023

In line with the London Safeguarding Children Board and the London Child Protection Procedures, Old Oak Primary School operates a whistle blowing policy.

The purpose of this document is to assist all staff to whistleblow if they have concerns about any adult in the school setting, whether paid or voluntary.

This policy reflects the requirements of

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- Keeping children safe in education 2016

This policy and the following procedures apply to all paid staff, volunteers and governors working with or in Old Oak Primary School.

This document applies to processes that must be followed in the following circumstances

- Concerns about the suitability of a member of staff (paid or voluntary) working with children  
See SECTION A
- Concerns about the conduct of staff and their suitability of working within the local authority  
See SECTION B
- If you are the subject of an allegation or whistleblow use SECTION B.
- To assist in determining which section, the following can be used as a guide. Whistleblowing is separate from LADO because only some whistleblows go to the LADO. A whistleblow could be made because of:
  - Allegations of harm or possible harm to a child from a staff member or volunteer in the school. SECTION A
  - Financial irregularity SECTION B
  - Adult bullying (not involving children) SECTION B
  - Cheating/changing assessment and exam results SECTION B
  - Health & safety concerns SECTION B, but consider SECTION A because of the impact of this on the possible safety of the child
  - Policies and procedures not being followed SECTION B, unless it concerns safeguarding and child protection issues in which case APPENDIX 2, Escalation policy.

### Section A: Child Protection Whistle Blowing

All staff should be aware of this policy and feel confident to voice concerns about the attitudes or actions of colleagues; this includes contact and actions using mobile phones, internet, email and chat.

If a member of staff believes a colleague has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children;

Please speak to your Co Headteacher immediately – Mr. Joe Brown/Mrs. Katie Beardsworth 020 87437629

The Headteacher will report to the LADO on the same working day.

If a member of staff is worried about the conduct of the Headteacher, or they believe that a reported allegation or concern is not being dealt with properly they should report the matter, on the same working day, to the Hammersmith and Fulham Local Authority, Designated Officer (LADO), on 02087535125 and ask to speak to the Duty Child Protection Advisor OR send an email [LADO@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@lbhf.gov.uk) and to the Chair of Governors – Mr. Graham Welch on [graham.welch@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:graham.welch@ucl.ac.uk)

For confidential advice on how to raise a concern about malpractice at work; visit 'Public Concern at Work' [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)

## **Section B: All Staff Whistle Blowing Policy**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the school. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that to speak up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the school. They may also fear harassment or victimisation.

In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report something which after all, may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

Old Oak Primary School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect and encourage employees, and others whom we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the school's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis (i.e. between the employee voicing the concern and the person to whom the concern is voiced).

This policy document makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, reprisal, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This Whistle Blowing/Confidential Reporting policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise concerns within Old Oak Primary School rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside, in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistle Blowing).

### **AIMS AND SCOPE**

This section of the whistle blowing policy applies to all employees at Old Oak Primary School (permanent, temporary, casual,), contractors and those in partnership roles working for the school on school premises, for example volunteers, agency staff, builders, etc.

This whistle blowing policy does not apply to pupils/students. Where applicable, employees are responsible for making pupils/students aware of the existence of the schools complaints procedure and other appropriate reporting procedures.

The procedure is designed to enable employees to notify the Co Headteacher/Chair of Governors of any reasonable suspicion of illegal or improper conduct (see below)

It is a procedure in which the Co Headteacher/Chair of Governors will be expected to act swiftly and constructively in the investigation of any concerns in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.

Concern about a colleague's professional capability should not be dealt with using this procedure.

Where the concerns are about child protection or safeguarding children or young people, the School's Child Protection Policy must be followed.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Co Headteacher/Chair of Governors**

The Co Headteachers, or where the complaint is about both or one of the co-headteachers, the Chair of Governors, are expected to act swiftly and constructively in the investigation of any concerns in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.

Where concerns are raised with outside agencies the Co Headteachers/Chair of governors must fully cooperate with any resulting investigation(s).

The co-headteachers/Chair of Governors will make every effort to meet any request of anonymity where possible.

The co-headteachers/Chair of Governors, where possible, should inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation.

### **Employees**

All employees are expected to bring to the attention of the co-headteachers/Chair of Governors any serious impropriety or breach of procedure.

All employees who report concerns under the whistle blowing procedure must be prepared to justify and support their claim in writing.

If another member of staff (other than the Co Headteachers/Chair of Governors) is approached by a colleague on a matter of concern as defined in this document, he/she should be advised to take the matter to the Co Headteachers/Chair of Governors.

Employees must act in the public interest and must have reasonable grounds for believing the information to be accurate.

## **LEGAL**

Employees and workers who make a 'protected disclosure' are protected from being treated badly or being dismissed. If they are, they can claim unfair dismissal when the reason for the 'whistleblowing' meets any of the 'qualifying disclosures' criteria. They include when someone reports:

- Child protection issues
- That someone's health and safety is in danger
- Damage to the environment
- A criminal offence
- That the company/school isn't obeying the law i.e. not have the right insurance etc.
- That someone's covering up a wrongdoing

The Co Headteacher/Chair of Governors should ensure that, where this procedure has been used in the public interest, employees are not subjected to harassment and/or victimisation for doing so. The key piece of 'whistleblowing' legislation is the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

## **PROCEDURE**

### Key Principles

This procedure is not designed to replace or be used as an alternative to the schools' grievance procedure, which should be used where an employee is only aggrieved about his/her own situation. Employees who are worried about wrong doing at work do not necessarily have a personal grievance.

Employees must act in the public interest and must have reasonable grounds for believing the information to be accurate

No employee who uses this procedure in the public interest will be penalised for doing so. The school will not tolerate harassment and/or victimisation of any employee raising concerns.

An employee who is not sure whether the conduct he/she is concerned about does constitute illegal or improper conduct or is unsure about how to proceed can contact the co-headteachers/Chair of Governors or Public Concern at Work ([www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)) for advice.

### Safeguards

The school is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of Employees.

The school recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If you have a reasonable belief that what you are saying is true, you will have nothing to fear.

The school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) upon you as a result of making a disclosure in accordance with this policy and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in the public interest. The school in the event of reprisals or victimisation against you because you have acted in accordance with this policy, will consider and may take disciplinary action against the employee responsible for such victimisation and/or reprisal.

In some circumstances it is recognised that a person making information known about their colleagues may find it difficult to return to his/her normal job. The school has a duty of care to provide a safe working environment and treat its employees with respect. If this is not possible in the employee's normal job because of the situation surrounding the disclosure of confidential information, the school will seek to redeploy the individual, taking account of their generic and specialist skills, abilities and experience.

### Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

### Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful; if made, anonymously, the concern will be considered at the discretion of the school.

In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern; and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources
- Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in the public interest, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation that is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

#### Mechanism for Raising Concerns

Where the issue concerns one or both of your co-headteachers or, having made your report, you believe he/she has failed to take appropriate action, you should bring it to the attention of the Chair of Governors.

Employees who feel unable to follow this route, for whatever reason, have the option of contacting one of the names listed in section 6 (Useful Contacts)

Depending on the nature of the concern the complainant will be asked to justify and support their claim. Normally the complainant will be asked to do this in writing. It will, therefore, be helpful to note down any facts and dates as they happen.

Financial regulations require any employee who suspects fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity to ensure this is reported to the schools' internal auditor for possible investigation.

Normally you must first report any suspicion of such irregularities to the co-headteachers who in turn will report it to the Internal Audit and Corporate Risk Manager.

Employees who want to use the procedure but feel uneasy about it may wish to consult their trade union initially and bring a colleague or trade union representative along to any discussions, so long as the third party is independent of the issue.

Where anonymity is requested efforts will be made to meet the request where appropriate but that might not always be possible. The earlier and more open the expression of concern the easier it will be to take appropriate action.

Each case will be investigated thoroughly with the aim of informing the complainant of the outcome of any investigation as quickly as possible.

#### **Examples of Illegal and/or Improper Conduct**

- Fraudulent or improper use of the school's money or assets
- Dangerous practices at work
- Corruptly receiving any gift or advantage
- Allowing private interests to override the interests of the school

#### **USEFUL CONTACTS:**

- LADO, Tel: [LADO@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@lbhf.gov.uk)
- Education HR Ann Marie Power – Education HR Manager – [ann-marie.power@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:ann-marie.power@lbhf.gov.uk)
- Schools' Health & Safety Team- Marlon Barnes– [marlon.barnes@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:marlon.barnes@lbhf.gov.uk)
- Director of Audit, David Hughes – [david.hughesaudit@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:david.hughesaudit@lbhf.gov.uk)

- Head of People & Talent, Mary Lamont – [mary.lamont@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:mary.lamont@lbhf.gov.uk)

If you are a member of a union, you are also able to contact your union representative.

- Unison: 0845 355 0845
- GMB: 0207 736 5683

For confidential advice on how to raise a concern about malpractice at work; visit 'Public Concern at Work' [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)

#### Related Documents

- The School's Disciplinary Procedure
- The School's Grievance Procedure
- The Child Protection Policy for Schools