



Whistle Blowing Policy

Local

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Role Responsible: Executive Head

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Aims

The staff and Trustees of Humberstone Junior and Infant Academies seek to conduct all aspects of school business and activity with regard for high standards of conduct and integrity; this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. In the event that members of school staff, parents, Trustees or the school community at large become aware of activities which give cause for concern, Humberstone Junior and Infant Academies have 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.

Humberstone Junior Academy and Humberstone Infant Academy are committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treat these issues seriously. We also recognise that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and have 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.

Both academies are 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.

This policy applies to matters of suspected fraud, impropriety or abuses of roles and responsibilities and not matters of general or personal grievance which would be dealt with under the Trust Grievance Procedures.

When might the whistle-blowing policy apply?

The type of activity or behaviour which Humberstone Junior and Infant Academies consider should be dealt with under this policy includes:

- abuse of position , power or responsibility
- any concerns about the conduct of an adult employed by the Trust
- any concerns about a member of staff's actions towards children or other adults
- manipulation of accounting records and finances
- inappropriate use of school assets or funds
- decision-making for personal gain
- any criminal activity
- fraud and deceit

- serious breaches of school procedures which may advantage a particular party (for example, failure to register a personal interest)

What action should the whistle-blower take?

Humberstone Junior Academy and Humberstone Infant Academy encourage the whistle-blower to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those school staff and Leaders in positions of responsibility and authority the opportunity to fully investigate the allegations

We have designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the whistle-blower is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Name & Position Contact details

Executive Headteacher: Annemarie Williams – 0116 276 7248

Chair of Trust Board: Kate Smith – 0116 276 7248

(contact Mrs T Burton for email address)

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 can be raised with the NSPCC on their whistle-blowing hotline or can be directed directly to the Ofsted whistle-blowing hotline.

NSPCC Whistle Blowing Hotline: 0800 028 0285

Ofsted Whistle Blowing Hotline: 0300 123 3155

Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Or write to:

WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

If you have a concern but are unsure how to proceed, you can get free, confidential advice from the independent whistle-blowing charity Public Concern at Work; it can help you to decide whether and/or how to raise your concern. You can call on 020 7404 6609 or email helpline@pcaw.co.uk.

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 the Trust Board, school staff, legal or personnel advisors, the police, the Department for Education and Employment and/or others.

If allegations relate to any concerns about adult's conduct or their actions towards children the school will follow **Leicester Safeguarding Children Board procedures and those set out in the School Safeguarding Policy and Management of Allegations of Abuse Policy.**

Records will be kept of work undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation. The investigating officer(s), possibly in conjunction with the Trustees, will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include a best practice conversation, 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 Board of Directors.

If the whistle-blower believes there has been a failure to follow the process their concerns should be first raised with the investigating officer.

In the event that the whistle-blower still has concerns regarding the process they should raise these with the Chair of the Board of Directors detailing their specific concerns. The whistle-blower has no right of appeal against the outcome of an investigation.

Respecting confidentiality

Wherever possible Humberstone Junior and Infant Academies seek to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the whistle-blower and will as far as possible protect him/her from reprisals. Humberstone Junior and Infant Academies 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, vexatious or unfounded concerns or attempt to deliberately 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 Humberstone Junior and Infant Academies in terms of the systems of Safeguarding, internal control both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the schools operate, ensures 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.