



# Whistleblower Policy

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## **1. Purpose and scope**

The Swedish School in London is committed to creating and maintaining a culture of openness, so that individuals feel encouraged and confident to raise any concerns relating to suspected misconduct at an early stage.

We also recognise the negative effect which malpractice can have on the school and, therefore, encourage you to raise genuine concerns or any suspicions you may have concerning misconduct.

This policy is intended to cover concerns that are made in the public interest. If the matter is of an individual or personal nature it should be pursued through the Grievance Procedure, examples of this includes complaints or concerns relating to discrimination, victimisation or harassment.

This policy applies to full and part-time employees, contractors and agency workers, except if they are genuinely self-employed. The policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the school at any time.

## **2. Protection**

We appreciate that those reporting concerns may be apprehensive. We want to reassure you that you will suffer no detrimental treatment as a result of voicing your concerns.

We will not tolerate victimisation, harassment, bullying or any other detrimental treatment of any worker who has made a disclosure under this policy. Complaints about such behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

## **3. Legislation and guidance**

Protection for whistleblowers in the UK is provided under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), which amends the Employment Rights Act 1996. The PIDA protects employees and workers who blow the whistle about wrongdoing.

Employees who make "protected disclosures" under the PIDA can claim unfair dismissal if their contracts are terminated due to the disclosures. Additionally, they are protected from other detriments that may result, such as a refusal to offer promotion, facilities or training opportunities.

Workers who are not employees (for example, independent contractors and workers supplied through an agency) cannot make an unfair dismissal claim, but can claim that they have experienced detrimental treatment.

## **4. Disclosures under this policy**

You can make a disclosure under this Policy if you have genuine concerns relating to any of the following areas of malpractice, or suspected malpractice:

- Safeguarding;
- Criminal activity;
- Miscarriages of justice;
- Practices endangering health and safety;
- Practices damaging the environment;
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation;
- Bribery;
- Financial malpractice, impropriety or fraud;
- Attempts to conceal any of the above.

The malpractice can be past, present or prospective. It may have occurred inside or outside the United Kingdom.

You are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. No action will be taken against you if you raise genuine concerns even if the concern you raised is not confirmed by any subsequent investigation.

## **5. Confidentiality and anonymity**

Any disclosure you make under this policy will be treated as far as reasonably practicable in a confidential and sensitive manner. If confidentiality is not reasonably practicable, for instance, because of the nature of the information, this will be explained to you.

We hope you will feel comfortable to voice any concerns openly, however, you may make a disclosure anonymously. However, concerns expressed anonymously cannot be dealt with as effectively as open disclosures as they are often more difficult to investigate.

## **6. Reporting a concern**

In many cases it will be appropriate for the member of staff to raise any concerns informally with their closest manager in the first instance, either in person or in writing. It may be possible to agree a way of resolving the concern quickly and effectively.

However, where the matter is more serious, or the member of staff feels that their closest manager or the management team has not addressed the concern they should in the first instance contact the Chair of the Board via email [chairman@swedishschool.org.uk](mailto:chairman@swedishschool.org.uk)

If the disclosure concerns the Chairman, the member of staff may raise the concern with the Deputy Chair via email [ccudworthfranson@swedishschool.org.uk](mailto:ccudworthfranson@swedishschool.org.uk)

The person to whom the disclosure is made will decide whether the matter should be dealt with under this procedure. If he or she considers that the matter should be dealt with under a different School policy or procedure, s/he will advise the person making the disclosure as to the appropriate steps that should be taken.

## **7. Process**

The person to whom the disclosure is made will normally consider the information and decide whether there is a case to answer. He or she will decide whether an investigation should be conducted and what form it should take. This will depend on the nature of the matter raised and may be:

- investigated internally
- referred to the External Auditors
- the subject of independent enquiry

If the person to whom the disclosure is made decides not to proceed with an investigation, the decision will be explained as fully as possible to the individual who raised the concern.

## **8. Investigation**

Any investigation will be conducted sensitively and promptly. The employee will be notified of the intended timetable for the investigation.

The person to whom the disclosure is made may authorise an initial investigation to establish the relevant facts. The investigator will report his or her findings to the person to whom the disclosure was made, who will then decide if there is a case to answer and what steps, if any,

should be taken. This may include setting up a special internal independent investigation or reference to some external authority, such as the police, for further investigation. The decision may be that the matter would be more appropriately handled under existing procedures for grievance, bullying and harassment, or discipline.

Where a disclosure is made any person or persons potentially implicated in wrongdoing will be told at an early stage of it and of the evidence supporting it, and they will be allowed to respond. Should an investigation conclude there has been a breach of School discipline, the member or members of staff responsible may, in addition to any civil or criminal proceedings, be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

The individual making the disclosure will be informed of what action is to be taken where possible although the need for confidentiality means it may not be possible to share some of the details including, for example, specific information about any disciplinary action taken against another member of staff. Staff should treat any information about the disclosure, the investigation or its outcome as confidential.

## **9. Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the process**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you should raise this with the Chair of the Board, giving the reasons for your dissatisfaction. He/she will respond in writing notifying you of his/her acceptance or rejection of the need for further investigation and the reasons for this.

You are also free to report the matter to the school inspectorate in England and/or Sweden via their respective websites:

- [The Swedish Schools Inspectorate \("Skolinspektionen"\)](#)
- [Department for Education and Ofsted](#)

## **10. Training**

All staff will receive an appropriate briefing to ensure that they are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities under this policy. The policy is available to all employees in the shared folder on Team Drive called "School Policies and Documents". All managers will be fully briefed as to their role in supporting this policy and the appropriate action to take in the event of any disclosure being made to them.

## **11. Breach of this Policy**

We may invoke the Disciplinary Procedure if you are found to have subjected a whistleblower to any form of detrimental treatment. It may also be invoked if you have intentionally misled us in respect of any matter, breached this policy in any other way and/or if we believe that you have made a false allegation maliciously.

## **12. Links with other documents and policies**

This Whistleblower policy is linked to the following policies and documents that can be found in the shared folder on Google Drive ("School Documents and Policies"):

- Staff Service Agreement
- Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- Staff Grievance Procedures
- Complaints Procedure
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure