



# WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

This Policy was approved at a meeting of the Full Governing Body on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Chair of Governors:	Mr L Shilling
Headteacher:	Ms Y Nunn
Finance Governor:	Mr J Cox

Signed .....  ..... Chair of Governors

Signed .....  ..... Headteacher

Review Date: Summer 2026

## **Introduction**

The Academy Trust of Hampton Primary School is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage employees and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns. In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis.

This procedure encourages employees to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation, internally within Hampton Primary School rather than over-looking a problem or raising the matter outside.

It applies to all employees, agency workers and those contractors working on the premises, for example, cleaners, builders and drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with Hampton Primary School in their own premises.

This procedure is separate from Hampton Primary School's Complaints Procedures.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affects an individual.

## **Aim & Scope**

This procedure aims to ensure individuals are:

- encouraged to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- provided with avenues to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- given a response to their concerns and are aware of how to pursue them if not satisfied.
- reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief any disclosure has been made in good faith.

There are existing procedures in place to enable individuals to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment including issues relating to harassment and bullying. This procedure is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures.

These include:

- conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely occur the result of which Hampton Primary School fails to comply with a legal obligation. For example unauthorised use of public funds, possible fraud and corruption, sexual or physical abuse of clients, or other unethical conduct discrimination of any kind and waste/frivolous expenditure
- disclosures related past, current or likely miscarriages of justice
- past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees (see below)
- past, current or likely damage to the environment

Concerns about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of staff or others acting on behalf of Hampton Primary School, can be reported under the Confidential Disclosure Procedure. This may be about something that you:

- feel uncomfortable about in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards they believe Hampton Primary School subscribes to: or
- is against Hampton Primary School's Standing Orders and policies; or
- falls below established standards of practice; or
- amounts to improper conduct.

Hampton Primary School's Complaints Procedure should be used to raise any issues, concerns or complaints of a health and safety nature and which are not confidential.

### **Confidentiality**

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness.

### **Anonymous Allegations**

Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those that are attributed to a named individual. However anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at the Academy Trust's discretion.

In exercising the 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 good faith that is not subsequently confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken. Disciplinary action will only be taken against individuals who knowingly make false, malicious or vexatious allegations.

### **How To Raise A Concern**

#### **General**

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing. A concern raised in writing should:

- should set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible
- the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

The earlier a concern is raised the easier it is to take action. Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.

A trade union or professional association may raise a matter on behalf of an employee.

Any fraud or irregularity over £5,000, or that is unusual or systematic regardless of value, should be immediately reported to the EFA.

### **Step One – Raising a Concern**

- I. Whenever possible the Representor (the person raising the concern) should raise their concern with their immediate Line Manager. If they feel this is inappropriate, they may raise the concern with one of the Members or Governors.
- II. If the Line Manager believes the concern to be genuine and that it is appropriate to use the Whistleblowing procedure, the Manager should contact the Headteacher (the Assessor). If a Member or Governor has been approached in the first instance and they believe the concern to be genuine, they will contact the Chair of Governors (or another Member if the Chair of Governors was approached in the first instance). The Member/Chair will then act as the Assessor.
- III. Should it be alleged that the Headteacher is involved in the alleged malpractice, a Deputy Headteacher or Member should be contacted to act as Assessor.
- IV. If the Representor feels unable to raise their concern with their Line Manager in the first instance, they may contact the Assessor direct. If this occurs, the Representor will be asked to justify why they feel unable to raise the concern with their Line Manager.

### **Step Two – The Assessor should:**

- I. Interview the Representor within 7 working days, in confidence, or earlier if there is an immediate danger to loss or life or serious injury;
- II. Obtain as much information as possible from the Representor about the grounds for the belief of malpractice;
- III. Consult with the Representor about further steps which could be taken;
- IV. Advise the Representor of the appropriate route if the matter does not fall under the Academy's Whistleblowing procedure;
- V. Report all matters raised under this procedure to the Headteacher or, where relevant, the Chair of the Governing Body or Members.

At the interview with the Assessor, the Representor may be accompanied by a recognised trade union representative or a work colleague. The Assessor may be accompanied by a member of the Academy's staff to take notes.

Within 10 working days of the interview, the Assessor will recommend one or more of the following:

- I. The matter be investigated internally by the Academy;
- II. The matter be investigated by the external auditors appointed by the Academy;
- III. The matter be reported to the Department for Education and Skills;
- IV. The matter be reported to the Police;
- V. The route for the member of staff to pursue the matter if it does not fall within this procedure; or
- VI. That no further action is taken by the Academy.

The grounds on which no further action is taken include:

- I. The Assessor is satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, there is no evidence that malpractice within the meaning of this procedure has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- II. The Assessor is satisfied that the Representor is not acting in good faith;
- III. The matter is already (or has been) the subject of proceedings under one of the Academy's other procedures or policies;
- IV. The matter concerned is already the subject of legal proceedings, or has already been referred to the Police, the external auditors, the Department for Education or other public authority.

Should it be alleged that the Headteacher is involved in the alleged malpractice, the Assessor's recommendation will be made to the Chair of the Governing Body/Members.

The recipient of the recommendation (Headteacher/Chair of Governing Body/Members) will ensure that it is implemented unless there is good reason for not doing so in whole or in part. Such a reason will be reported to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

The Representor's identity will be kept confidential unless the Representor otherwise consents or unless there are grounds to believe that the Representor has acted maliciously. In the absence of such consent or grounds, the Assessor will not reveal the identity of the Representor except:

- I. Where the Assessor is under a legal obligation to do so;
- II. Where the information is already in the public domain;
- III. On a strictly confidential basis to a professionally qualified lawyer for the purpose of obtaining legal advice
- IV. Where it is essential that the Representor provides evidence at a disciplinary hearing or other proceedings.

The conclusion of any agreed investigation will be reported by the Assessor to the Representor within 28 days.

All responses to the Representor will be made in writing and sent to the Representor's home address.

If the Representor has not had a response within the above time limits, they may appeal to the Chair of the Governing Body/Member or, if appropriate, the appointed external auditors, but will inform the Assessor before doing so.

The Representor may at any time disclose the matter on a confidential basis to a professionally qualified lawyer for the purpose of taking legal advice.

### **Malicious Accusations**

Deliberately false or malicious accusations made by a Representor will be dealt with under the Academy's disciplinary procedure.

## **External Sources**

Whistleblowing to an external source without first going through the internal procedure is inadvisable without compelling reasons. A reason may be that the Representor is not content with the conclusion of the Assessor. In particular, this means careful about what is said to the media. Compelling reasons could be the involvement of the Governing Body as a whole, serious health and safety issues or possible discrimination. The external sources which could be used are:

- Department for Education
- Member of Parliament
- National Audit Office
- Health and Safety Executive
- Police

The Academy will ensure the Representor is protected from any form of victimisation or discrimination.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Governing Body will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.