



**MERCHANT
TAYLORS'
SCHOOLS**

For Boys and Girls
aged 4 to 18 years

Whistleblowing Policy

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Author: Head of HR
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Purpose:

Merchant Taylors' Schools Crosby encourages a free and open culture with all of its employees and anyone who engages with the Schools. In particular, this organisation recognises that effective and honest communication is essential if concerns about breaches or failures are to be effectively dealt with and the organisation's success ensured.

This policy is designed to provide guidance to all those who work with or within the Schools who may from time to time feel that they need to raise certain concerns or issues relating to the organisation with someone in confidence.

Workers who in the public interest raise genuine concerns under this policy will not under any circumstances be subjected to any form of detriment or disadvantage as a result of having raised their concerns.

1. **Whistleblowing at Work:** This procedure is designed to allow any wrongdoing at the School to be brought to the attention of the appropriate person and rectified (known as disclosures). It is available to all employees who discover something they feel they should pass on. All types of wrongdoing are included whether they are acts committed by fellow employees, faults in School procedures or oversights which should be rectified examples of these may include but are not limited to:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Failing to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Endangering the health & safety of an individual
- Environmental damage
- Financial fraud and malpractice
- Offering, giving or receiving bribes
- A deliberate breach of company policies
- Corruption
- Deliberate concealment of information relating to the above

These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example a disclosure qualifies if it relates to the environmental damage that has happened, is happening or is likely to happen.

This procedure should not however be used where the information you have regarding a wrongdoing relates to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. The Grievance Procedure should be used in these type of cases.

2. **Detriment:** Provided that this procedure is used correctly and you believe the truth of the facts you are reporting; you will not suffer any detriment as a result of reporting the wrongdoing. A failure to follow this procedure may, however, make the disclosure unreasonable and the protection given to you by this procedure may be lost. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform a Head Teacher or the

Director of Finance & Operations. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using the Grievance Procedure.

3. **Confidentiality:** We hope that employees will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures can be difficult to investigate, however, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.
4. **Procedure:** If you wish to raise or discuss any issues which might fall into the above categories you should make your disclosure in writing to the Head of Human Resources who will treat the matter in confidence. The Head of Human Resources will consider your written disclosure, take appropriate advice, and decide if the matter is a whistleblowing matter. If it is considered that there may be a case to answer, an investigation will be necessary and you may be required to attend an investigation as a witness. In the absence of the Head of Human Resources you should approach a member of the Executive Team such as a Head Teacher or the Director of Finance & Operations, as appropriate.
5. It is not necessary that you prove the malpractice or misconduct that you are alleging, this will be for the investigation to ascertain, you are simply raising a reasonable suspicion which be investigated fairly.
6. The School will investigate all disclosures promptly. When a disclosure is received timescales for updates will be agreed with all parties. The employee will be informed, where practical, by the person conducting the investigation regarding the outcome of the investigation.
7. The person conducting the investigation will take any necessary action, including, if appropriate reporting the matter to the Governing Body, the police, any appropriate governmental department or regulatory body. If disciplinary action is required, the matter will be discussed with Human Resources and disciplinary proceedings will commence in line with the employer's disciplinary procedure.
8. **Protection and Support for Whistle-blowers:** You should be aware that protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act will apply where a disclosure is made in good faith and without any personal gain, and where you reasonably believe the disclosure (and any allegation/s contained within) are substantially true.
9. This policy has been produced in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects workers making disclosures about malpractice within the organisation (where those disclosures are made in accordance with the provisions of the Act) from dismissal or detriment short of dismissal.
10. **Abuse:** The School will not tolerate malicious allegations. Any person purposely thought to be making malicious or vexatious allegations may find themselves subject to disciplinary action.
11. This policy cannot be used to re-examine issues that have already been addressed through the grievance or disciplinary procedures.
12. **Queries:** If you have any queries about this procedure you should contact the HR Team.

Reviewed January 2019 Gary Sharp