



Federation of Stewart Headlam and Hague Schools' Whistle-blowing Policy

Approved by:	Chair of Finance 	Date: 7 th October 2021
Last reviewed on:	October 2020 This is a refreshed SHH Federation Policy for consistency between the 2 schools based on Use the Key Model and Tower Hamlets Audit & HR.	
Next review due by:	October 2022	

Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation.....	2
3. Definition of whistle-blowing	2
4. Procedure for staff to raise a whistle-blowing concern.....	3
5. Procedure for responding to a whistle-blowing concern.....	4
6. Malicious or vexatious allegations	5
7. Escalating concerns beyond the school leadership team and governors	5
8. Approval.....	5
9. Links with other policies.....	5

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Encourage individuals affected to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated and that their confidentiality will be respected
- Let all staff in the trust know how to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing in or by the trust
- Set clear procedures for how the trust will respond to such concerns
- Let all staff know the protection available to them if they raise a whistle-blowing concern
- Assure staff that they will not be victimised for raising a legitimate concern through the steps set out in the policy even if they turn out to be mistaken (though vexatious or malicious concerns may be considered a disciplinary issue)

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. The policy applies to all employees or other workers who provide services to the trust in any capacity including self-employed consultants or contractors who provide services on a personal basis and agency workers.

2. Legislation

This policy has been written in line with the [government guidance on whistle-blowing](#). We also take into account the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#).

3. Definition of whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing covers concerns made that report wrongdoing that is "in the public interest". Examples of whistle-blowing include (but are not limited to):

- Criminal offences, such as fraud or corruption
- Pupils' or staffs' health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Breaches of financial management procedures
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest
- Damage to the environment

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to the above.

Not all concerns about the trust count as whistle-blowing. For example, personal staff grievances such as bullying or harassment do not usually count as whistle-blowing. If something affects a staff member as an individual, or relates to an individual employment contract, this is likely a grievance.

When staff have a concern they should consider whether it would be better to follow our staff grievance or complaints procedures.

Where the concerns are about safeguarding children staff should notify the Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSL) and follow the Federation Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Reporting Procedures.

Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) has:

- [Further guidance](#) on the difference between a whistle-blowing concern and a grievance that staff may find useful if unsure
- A free and confidential [advice line](#)

4. Procedure for staff to raise a whistle-blowing concern

4.1 When to raise a concern

Staff should consider the examples in section 3 when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

4.2 Who to report to

Staff should report their concerns to the **Executive Headteacher of Head of School**

If the concern is about the Executive Headteacher or Heads of School or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Chair of Governors and Local Authority Chief Internal Auditor

Name & Position	Contact details	Contact details
Executive Headteacher of Stewart Headlam and Hague Schools	<p style="text-align: center;">Judy Knappett Designated Safeguarding Lead head@hague.towerhamlets.sch.uk</p>	
	<p>Sue Walsh Head of Hague School Designated Safeguarding Lead swalsh@hague.towerhamlets.sch.uk</p>	<p>Nilufar Chowdhury Head of Stewart Headlam School Designated Safeguarding Lead Nchowdhury10.211@Igfmail.org</p>
Chair of Governors for the Federation of Stewart Headlam and Hague Schools	<p style="text-align: center;">Mike Coleman</p>	
Local Authority Chief Internal Auditor	<p style="text-align: center;">Tel: 0207 364 5000</p>	

4.3 How to raise the concern

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible to the Executive Head or Heads of School. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

Any mail addressed to the Chair of Governors via the school office will be passed on directly for opening.

The *whistleblower* 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.

Alternatively, if the *whistleblower* considers the matter too serious or sensitive to raise within the internal environment of the school, the matter should be directed in the first instance to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Chief Internal Auditor.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has its own procedures for dealing with such matters and will ensure every effort to respect the confidentiality of the *whistleblower*. The LEA will ensure relevant officers of the Department for Education and Employment are informed as appropriate.

In addition, information and advice can be obtained from the charity Protect, formerly Public Concern at Work. This charity offers free legal advice in certain circumstances to people concerned about serious malpractice at work. Their literature states that matters are handled in strict confidence and without obligation.

Contact details for the charity are as follows:

Public Concern at Work
Suite 306, 16 Baldwins Gardens
London EC1N 7RJ
Tel: 0207 404-6607

5. Procedure for responding to a whistle-blowing concern

5.1 Investigating the concern

When a concern is received by the - **Executive Headteacher or Head of School** referred to from here as the 'recipient' - they will:

- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative
- Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information. If it becomes apparent the concern is not of a whistle-blowing nature, the recipient should handle the concern in line with the appropriate policy/procedure
- Reiterate, at this meeting, that they are protected from any unfair treatment or risk of dismissal as a result of raising the concern. If the concern is found to be malicious or vexatious, disciplinary action may be taken (see section 6 of this policy)
- Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there is:
 - The recipient should then arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the Executive Headteacher and Chair of Governors. The issue may be passed to an investigating officer or if appropriate they may need to report the matter to the police
 - The person who raised the concern should be informed of how the matter is being investigated and an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps

5.2 Outcome of the investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred. The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, **the Executive Headteacher, Heads of School, governors and other staff** if necessary will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

Whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

6. Malicious or vexatious allegations

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns when they believe there to potentially be an issue. If an allegation is made in good faith, but the investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the trust will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

7. Escalating concerns beyond the school leadership team and governors

The school leadership team and governors encourage staff to raise their concerns internally, in line with section 4 of this policy, but recognises that staff may feel the need to report concerns to an external body. A list of prescribed bodies to whom staff can raise concerns with is included [here](#).

The Protect advice line, linked to in section 3 of this policy, can also help staff when deciding whether to raise the concern to an external party.

8. Approval

This policy will be reviewed every 1 years.

The Federation Governing Body of Stewart Headlam and Hague Schools, who will approve them whenever reviewed, have agreed these procedures.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff grievance policy
- Complaints procedure
- Child protection policy