



WPS Whistle-blowing Policy & Procedure

Whole School Policy & Procedure, including EYFS

WPS Mission Statement

To offer academic and creative excellence in a caring, respectful and stimulating environment

Child Protection Statement

WPS is committed to safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare and expects all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant, safe and caring environment. Everyone has a responsibility to act without delay to protect children by reporting anything that might suggest a child is being abused or neglected. It is our willingness to work safely and challenge inappropriate behaviours that underpins this commitment. The School seeks to work in partnership with families and other agencies to improve the outcomes for children who are vulnerable or in need.

WPS follows guidelines laid down by the **Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP)** and the most recent **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**.

School Aims

- To provide academic excellence through a broad, balanced and varied curriculum
- To ensure that our pupils develop lively, enquiring and creative minds
- To value each boy and girl as an individual so as to maximise his or her potential and confidence
- To offer a safe, caring and kind environment
- To encourage self-respect and respect for others

'British values' (democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect) and SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) provision underpins our curriculum.

School Rules

We are gentle. We don't hurt others.

We are kind and helpful. We don't hurt anybody's feelings.

We listen – first time. We don't interrupt.

We are honest. We don't cover up the truth.
We work hard. We don't waste our time or other's time.
We look after property. We don't waste or damage things.

INTRODUCTION

The staff and governors of Wilmslow Preparatory School seek to run all aspects of School business and activity with full regard for high standards of conduct and integrity. If members of School staff, parents, governors or others working in School become aware of activities which give cause for concern, Wilmslow Preparatory School has this whistle-blowing policy. This 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.

Wilmslow Preparatory School is committed to tackling fraud and other forms of malpractice and treats these issues seriously. Wilmslow Preparatory School recognises that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and has therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within our School environment but also has recourse to an external party outside the management structure of the School.

If a member of staff has a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice, he/she may feel it is difficult to express their concerns because speaking up will be disloyal to colleagues or to the School. It is possible staff may fear harassment, victimisation or some other form of reprisal if they speak up, therefore they may ignore the concern rather than report what may be just a suspicion of malpractice. However, the School accepts that whistle-blowers can assist in uncovering wrongdoing. This can help prevent accidents, financial scandals, criminal offences and regulatory breaches.

This policy and procedure makes it clear that employees can share concerns without fear of reprisals. It applies to all staff and those contractors working for the School on School premises and includes, for example, agency staff, builders, and drivers. It also covers those providing services under a contract with the School.

THE PROTECTED DISCLOSURES ACT 2014

This Act protects workers who 'blow the whistle' about wrongdoing. It states the types of disclosures which may be protected; the circumstances in which the disclosures are protected; and the persons who may be protected.

The provisions introduced by the Act protect most workers from being subjected to a 'detriment' by their employer.

'Detriment' may take a number of forms, such as denial of promotion, facilities or training opportunities, which the employer would otherwise have offered.

Employees may make a claim for unfair dismissal if they are dismissed for making a protected disclosure.

AIMS

This policy aims to:

- Provide means by which staff can raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Reassure staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation.

- A culture that all staff and volunteers feel confident to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices.

The policy does not replace the School's Complaints procedure. There are also procedures in place relating to Discipline, Grievance, and Capability etc. This policy covers concerns that fall outside these procedures, such as malpractice or wrongdoing.

Any concern that a person has regarding a suspicion of malpractice or wrongdoing in any aspect of the School life, or relating to the conduct of staff within School, or others acting on behalf of the School, can and should be reported. Members of staff are expected to report malpractice and wrongdoing and may be liable to disciplinary action if they knowingly and deliberately do not disclose information relating to such.

Staff can approach certain external agencies, such as ISA, ISI, DfE, LADO, etc., if they are concerned the school may destroy evidence.

WHAT IS MALPRACTICE OR WRONGDOING?

Malpractice and wrongdoing may be about something which is;

- unlawful
- against the School's policies
- not in accordance with established or expected standards of practice
- improper conduct

The overriding consideration is that it would be in everyone's interest for such malpractice to be corrected and, if appropriate, sanctions to be applied.

The following are examples of issues which could constitute malpractice. They are not exhaustive;

- Any unlawful act or omission, whether criminal or a breach of civil law
- A breach of any statutory requirements, particularly with regard to safeguarding
- A serious breach of, or failure to implement or comply with, any School policy
- Corruption or fraud of any type
- Any action that could result in physical danger to any person, or give rise to risk of significant damage to property
- Failure to take reasonable steps to report and rectify any situation which is likely to give rise to loss of income to the School.
- Using the School's powers and authority for any unauthorised or ulterior purpose
- Unfair discrimination in employment procedures
- Dangerous procedures risking health and safety
- Damage to the environment
- Unethical conduct
- safeguarding concerns, particularly where another member of staff behaves in an inappropriate manner towards a pupil, or where the DSL does not follow up a safeguarding concern about a pupil.

SAFEGUARDS

The School recognises that the decision to report a concern can be difficult, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice or from the School as a whole. The School will not tolerate any such harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action in order to protect staff who raise a concern in good faith.

In addition, staff are protected in law by the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, which gives employees protection from detriment and dismissal where they have made a protected disclosure, providing the legal requirements of the Act are satisfied.

A staff member's disclosure is protected by the legislation when it relates to a "relevant wrongdoing". "Relevant wrongdoing" includes criminal offences; failure to comply with legal obligations (this does not include disclosures of breaches relating to the worker's own terms of employment); miscarriages of justice; health and safety matters; environmental damage; unlawful or improper use of public money; an act or omission by a public body that is oppressive, discriminatory, grossly negligent or constitutes gross mismanagement; and if information in relation to any of the above is concealed or destroyed.

This does not necessarily mean that if staff are already the subject of disciplinary procedures that those procedures will be halted as a result of a concern being raised under this policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is easier to follow up and to verify complaints if complainants are prepared to give their names. However, wherever possible the School will protect those who prefer not to disclose their names. It must be appreciated, however, that such protection cannot be guaranteed because an investigative process may reveal the source of the information, and a statement from complainants may be required as part of the evidence.

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. They will be considered at the discretion of the School and treated with caution. In exercising this discretion the School will consider the following;

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of obtaining the necessary information and confirmation of the allegation.

DELIBERATELY FALSE OR MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

The School considers false or malicious allegations seriously. It will regard the making of such allegations by any member of staff as a serious disciplinary offence which could result in dismissal. If an allegation is made in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the complainant.

The School will try to ensure that the negative impact of any malicious or unfounded allegation about any employee is minimised.

PROCEDURE

This procedure is separate from the School's adopted procedure regarding grievance. Individuals should not use the whistle-blowing procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation.

How is a concern raised?

If wrongdoing in the workplace is suspected;

- Individuals should not be approached or accused directly
- Individuals should not attempt to investigate the matter themselves
- Individuals should not convey suspicions to anyone other than a member of the SMT or, if the suspicion relates to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors.
- As a first step, report the concern to the Headteacher.
- If the Headteacher is involved in the matter of concern, report to the Chair of Governors.

Concerns may be raised verbally; however it is advised that they are reported in writing. The report should;

- set out the background and history of the concern
- give relevant names, dates and places where possible,
- state the reason why the situation is of concern.

The earlier a concern is expressed; the easier it is to take appropriate action and resolve matters. Complainants are not expected to prove the truth of allegations; however they are required to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for concern.

How will the School respond?

The action taken by the School will depend on the nature of the concern. Where appropriate, matters raised by the complainant may:

- be investigated by senior management or governors
- become part of a process of mediation
- be resolved speedily if possible
- when matters cannot be resolved speedily they may become part of a disciplinary process
- if appropriate (for example referring to safeguarding and child protection), be referred to the Social Service or Police
- if considered appropriate, be the subject of a referral to the General Teaching Council of England
- be considered in an independent enquiry

Within 7 working days of a concern being raised the Headteacher or chair of governors will write to the complainant to:

- acknowledge receipt of the report and concern
- indicate how it is proposed to proceed
- give an estimate of how long it may take to provide a final response;

The amount of contact between the complainant and the Headteacher/Chair of governors managing the complaint depends on the nature of the concerns. If necessary, further information will be sought from the complainant.

Where any meeting is arranged, if it is felt necessary, the complainant may be accompanied by a colleague or member of a professional association who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

The School will take appropriate steps to minimise any difficulties the complainant may experience as a result of raising a concern. For example, if the complainant is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings the School will advise about the procedures.

The School accepts that the complainant needs to be assured that the matter has been properly dealt with. Therefore, subject to any legal constraints, as much information as possible will be provided about the outcomes of any investigation. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns may be raised with the Chair of Governors. If that fails to resolve matters then the employee may seek the assistance of “Public Concern at Work” on 02031172520. [Protect \(Whistleblowing Advice\)](#).

For any concerns taken outside of the School this policy will not apply and any employee raising issues on a wider basis, e.g. with the press, without following the procedure in this policy may be liable to disciplinary action.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POLICY

The responsibility for the effectiveness and efficiency of this policy rests with the governing body and Headteacher. The Headteacher will maintain records of concerns, how they are dealt with and the outcomes reached. These records are available to the governing body for scrutiny.

CONCLUSION

Existing good practice within Wilmslow Preparatory School in terms of its systems of internal control, both financial and non-financial, and the external regulatory environment in which the School operates, ensures that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur. This whistleblowing 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. Any actions arising from allegations/investigation must be in accord with the School’s disciplinary procedure, which should cover all of the potential areas of concern.

Reviewed: September 2026
Next review: September 2027