



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

2024-2025



Approved by: *Headteacher*

Date: *September 2024*

Last reviewed *September 2024*
on:

Next review *September 2025*
due by:

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

This policy applies to the whole school, including EYFS.

Hale Prep is committed to high standards of openness and accountability. It encourages staff with serious concerns to come forward and raise those concerns without fear of dismissal, disloyalty, victimisation, or harassment. It is in everyone's interest that potential failings or malpractice are identified early so that appropriate action can be taken.

Aims of this Policy

- *To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing immediately, knowing their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.*
- *To ensure that staff confidentiality is respected.*
- *To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise concerns.*
- *To reassure staff that they should be able to raise concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals – a reasonable belief is sufficient.*

What is Whistleblowing?

It is the disclosure of information relating to suspected wrongdoing or danger at school, which may include:

- *Child Protection concerns*
- *Criminal activity*
- *Damage to the environment*
- *Danger to Health and Safety*
- *Financial fraud*
- *Breach of the school's policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct.*
- *Failure to comply with legal or regulatory requirements*
- *Negligence*
- *Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information*
- *The deliberate concealment of the above matters*

A 'whistle-blower' is a person who raises a genuine concern in good faith relating to any of those matters above. Suppose staff are unsure about raising an issue within the scope of this policy. In that case, they should seek advice from the Headteacher, or if the alleged wrongdoing involves the Headteacher, then staff should seek advice from the LADO.

Key Principles

- a) Hale Prep values its staff coming forward with serious suspicions or concerns about the above areas and hopes they will raise the matter as soon as possible if warranted and not wait for or search for proof.
- b) The school makes it clear that no staff member will be subject to any detrimental action by reporting concerns they believe to be true.
- c) All reported issues will be taken seriously and investigated.
- d) All reported issues will be treated confidentially, and feedback will be given on any action taken subject to legal constraints that may apply.
- e) Whistle-blowers should put their names to the allegation made wherever possible. Anonymous correspondence will be taken seriously, but subsequent investigations may prove difficult where all facts are unknown.
- f) If any meeting or interview is arranged, the whistle-blower has a right to accompany a colleague.
- h) Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistle-blowers in any way. Anyone involved in such activity will be subject to disciplinary action.

The advantages of a procedure for whistleblowing are:

- to provide a channel and process for individual staff to raise genuine and legitimate concerns;
- to protect our pupils from abuse and harm
- to deter serious malpractice;
- to avoid crisis management and public criticism;
- to promote accountability throughout the school.

It allows everyone to act professionally and with propriety to forestall or prevent any act which may damage people in the School or the School itself and its reputation.

Confidentiality

We recognise that raising a concern must be done confidently and as stated in the following procedure. The school will try to protect the identity of those staff who raise a serious concern and do not wish their identity to be disclosed. However, resolving such concerns by revealing identity may only be possible. In such cases, the whistle-blower (staff member) will be advised about how any investigation proceeds and will be supported fully.

The following procedure should be followed:

Raising a concern

- 1) As a first step, a staff member should normally discuss raising a concern with the headteacher.*
- 2) If there is a safeguarding concern regarding the headteacher, the Directors of Hale Preparatory School are to take responsibility for safeguarding leadership and contact the LADO if required. Due to the family nature of the management team, if a safeguarding allegation, Mrs Busby or Mr M Connor, the headteacher, would lead the process.*
- 3) The sooner a concern is raised, the easier it is to act.*
- 4) Concerns are better in writing for the avoidance of doubt. If they are raised verbally, the person receiving the concern should record it in writing immediately, including the date and time, and sign it. It should be read back to the whistle-blower (staff member) to confirm its accuracy. This will be kept confidential by the headteacher/director in CPOMS.*
- 6) Although the whistle-blower (staff member) is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, they must believe that there is sufficient cause for concern and action.*

Response from the School:

The action taken by the school will depend upon the seriousness of the concern.

- The Headteacher will be informed within 24 hours.*
- The Headteacher and a deputy will investigate the concern. Formal notes will be made for any meetings. All notes will be kept confidentially on CPOMS.*
- If criminal activity is involved, the police will be informed.*
- If any abuse or harm is suspected towards a child, then Trafford First Response will be informed immediately, and their advice will be taken.*

The school will aim to keep the whistle-blower (staff member) informed of the assessment's outcome, the investigation's progress, and its likely timescale.

Timescale for response:

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the Headteacher will:

Acknowledge in writing that the concern has been received and will indicate how it is proposed to deal with it. Give an estimate of how long it will likely take to respond and state whether any initial inquiries have been made. If possible, they will state whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.

False allegations

If a staff member makes an allegation in good faith that an investigation cannot confirm, no action will be taken against them. If a staff member makes an allegation for an ulterior motive, for example, a malicious reason, disciplinary action will be taken against them that could result in dismissal.

After any investigation or action, the staff member (whistle-blower) who raised the concern will be informed of the outcomes.

Checklist:

The Whistle-blower

Please do:

Raise the matter immediately if you feel your concerns are warranted.

Tell your suspicions or concerns to someone with the appropriate authority to deal with them.

Be assured that the school will take concerns based on honest and reasonable suspicions seriously.

Consider writing down the key points and details about why you are concerned.

Please do not:

Do nothing. -The school would prefer you to raise your concerns so we can conduct a full and fair investigation.

Be afraid of raising your concerns – the school has safeguards to protect staff who raise concerns.

Try to investigate the matter yourself – this may complicate later inquiries, particularly if a criminal investigation becomes necessary.

General guidance can be found at [Advice on Whistleblowing](#).

- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who cannot internally raise concerns regarding child protection failures. Staff can call 0800 028 0285, which is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday through Friday, or Email help@nspcc.org.uk.

The school ensures that there will be transparency and accountability about how concerns are received and handled.