

About this policy

- We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrong doing should be reported as soon as possible.
- This policy covers all employees, students, agency workers, interns, volunteers, casual workers, consultants and contractors.
- This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrong doing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

How to raise a concern

We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with the head teacher. However, where you prefer not to raise it with the head teacher for any reason, you should contact the managing director.

We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

Concerns regarding the safeguarding of children that you wish to report under this Whistleblowing policy must also be raised with the designated senior person according to our Safeguarding children policy. The managing director is nominated as the point of contact if there are safeguarding concerns that involve the designated senior person.

Safeguarding – allegations against staff

If for some reason you are unable to follow the school's allegations against staff policy (see *Safeguarding policy – appendix C* in the Woodcroft policy document at www.woodcroftschoo.net/policies.htm), then the referral route is via the Essex Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Essex Duty LADO number is 03330 139 797. This duty line is for allegations made against those who work with children only and is not a general line of enquiry for children's safeguarding. The telephone line is open from Monday to Friday (during office hours, excluding public holidays). All calls are managed by an IT system, so when the Duty LADO is engaged in a telephone call you will receive an automated voice message asking you to leave your contact details.

Confidentiality

We hope that you will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. 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.

External disclosures

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrong doing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body, such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work (PCAW), an independent whistleblowing charity, operates a confidential helpline: 020 7404 6609. Their email address is whistle@pcaw.co.uk and their website address is www.pcaw.co.uk

Protection and support for whistleblowers

We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the managing director immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our *Grievance policy*.

You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases the whistleblower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.