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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Windlesham House School (“the School”) encourages all its members of staff to speak up and say something if they have a concern at work. It is very important to us that our staff do speak up, especially because it can sometimes help us to address problems early, before they become major issues. We regard staff who raise genuine concerns as a positive asset and are grateful for the opportunities they provide to improve the School for everyone.
- 1.2 The School's Governors and Head understand that staff sometimes feel worried about raising concerns at work, especially when friends and managers are involved. However, we ask you to be confident that the School is fully committed to supporting staff who speak up. We will take any concerns you raise seriously and look into them quickly and fully, in a way which is sensitive, fair and honest.
- 1.3. We would ask you to raise concerns as soon as you become aware of them. Even if you are not completely certain about your concern, please do not wait for proof before raising the issue. So long as your concern is genuine, it does not matter if it turns out you have made a mistake, and it will not affect your future employment.

2. The kinds of concerns covered by this policy

- 2.1 Raising a concern is not the same as making a complaint. This policy is not intended to cover complaints about your own personal employment or working relationships. If your concern affects only you (for example, you feel you have been bullied, harassed or discriminated against), then you need to read the School's grievance procedure, which can be found on the shared drive.
- 2.2 The kinds of concern which this policy addresses are likely to involve the behaviour of other members of staff which you see or hear, and which seems to you risky, wrong, or even illegal. For example:
- behaviour towards pupils or staff which is unsafe or inappropriate
 - creating or using working conditions which are risky for pupils or staff
 - care of pupils (or a particular pupil) which is below standard
 - child abuse or neglect (on safeguarding concerns, see section 3 below)
 - failing to respond (or responding poorly) to an incident

- providing staff induction or training which is not adequate
- workplace bullying or discrimination (where other people are affected)
- neglect of duties, including unauthorised absence from work
- suspected financial malpractice (theft, fraud, bribery, embezzlement, corruption)
- concerns about the conduct of examinations
- concerns about the handling of personal data
- conduct which goes against the School's policies or procedures
- damaging the School environment or bringing the School and/or Charterhouse into disrepute
- covering up or failing to report the kinds of concern mentioned here

2.3 These are examples only. The list is not designed to be complete. Please note that several items on this list might be covered by the law (The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998):

- conduct endangering other people's health or safety
- committing a criminal offence (or failing to comply with a legal obligation)
- a miscarriage of justice
- damaging the environment

3. The procedures to follow

3.1 Before reporting a concern about what you have seen or heard at work, please take a moment to think about other possible explanations. You should not start your own investigation. You will not be asked to prove that your concern is true, only to confirm that you have reasonable grounds for your suspicion.

3.2 Safeguarding concerns (which involve the behaviour of adults towards children) have to be dealt with in a specific way, because they are covered by particular regulations. All concerns about the behaviour of members of staff towards pupils must go directly to the Head, as per the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection policy. Please remember that these matters can be extremely sensitive. You should not discuss the matter with other people before the Head, because colleagues have rights to confidentiality, too. Instead, if you suspect that a colleague (or any adult working or volunteering for the School) has been mistreating, abusing or neglecting a pupil, or behaving towards pupils in a way which is prohibited by the School's Conduct of Conduct policy, you must contact the Head directly:

bevans@windlesham.com
01903 874807

In the Head's absence, you should contact the Senior Deputy Head:

ssutherland@windlesham.com
01903 874036

3.3 **Other kinds of concern**, such as many of those listed above, can often be reported directly to your line manager. However,

- if your line manager is part of your concern, or
- if you are worried about the consequences of reporting to your line manager, or if you have already reported your concern to your line manager, and you are not satisfied with the outcome, or
- if you think your concern is too serious,

— then you are welcome to raise your concern with the Head or Senior Deputy Head (as above), or with any member of the Senior Leadership Team.

- 3.4 Support staff who are not employed to work directly with children could contact the Bursar:

sriley@windlesham.com

01903 874705

- 3.5 If you are concerned about the conduct of any senior manager, or if you have reported your concern to a senior manager and nothing seems to have been done, you should go directly to the Head. If you are concerned about the conduct of the Head himself, you should contact the Chair of Governors, Mr Mark Bishop:

MarkBishopGB@charterhouse.org.uk

- 3.6 Whoever receives your concern will write to you to confirm receipt and outline very briefly the course of action to be taken. If it is decided that no further action is necessary, the reasons for this will be explained to you. If action is to be taken, then you should expect to be informed of the decision, although please be aware that information is sometimes limited by other people's rights to privacy. You should expect to hear an outcome from the person to whom you reported your concern within ten days.
- 3.7 Anonymous allegations received by School managers will be passed to the Head or the Bursar, who will decide (on their merits) whether or not to pursue them. Please note that any employee who is found to have knowingly made an accusation which is false or malicious will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedures.

4. Confidentiality, protection and support: what you can expect

- 4.1 If you raise a genuine concern and follow the procedures in this policy, you will not lose your job because of it, or face disciplinary action or any other reprisals, even if it is later found that you were mistaken about your concern. If you feel you have been unfairly treated or subject to reprisals afterwards, you should contact the Head, the Bursar, or the Chair of Governors immediately. You could also consider using the School's grievance procedure.
- 4.2 The School is committed to staff wellbeing and will always offer support to colleagues in need. Members of staff who raise genuine concerns are assured that they will be treated with the greatest discretion and confidentiality. If staff request it, their identity will be protected as far as possible. Staff attending meetings about concerns they have raised may ask for them to be held at a location away from the School.
- 4.3 Sometimes, however, it is impossible to conduct an investigation or address an issue without revealing the identity of the person who raised the matter. In such situations, the manager responsible for addressing the concern will inform the member of staff before revealing their identity.
- 4.4 When the identity of the member of staff raising the concern is suspected or known by colleagues in the workplace, the responsible manager will take action to minimise any possible harassment or victimisation. The School will not tolerate retaliation against staff who raise genuine concerns, or any attempt to pressurise people into withdrawing them. Employees who victimise or harass colleagues making a disclosure under this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

5. Reporting concerns to external organisations

- 5.1 If you have a genuine concern, please raise it first with managers inside the School as outlined above, rather than ignoring it, or discussing it with people outside the School. Sometimes, however, it may be necessary to raise your concern outside of the School.
- 5.2 For example, if there is the potential for a criminal offence to have taken place (or be about to take place), then you can either report the matter to the police yourself or report it to a senior manager who (in every case where a crime may be involved) will contact the police.
- 5.3 If you have reported a concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, and you disagree with the DSL's decision not to report the matter to the Local Authority (or you are concerned that the pupil's situation does not seem to be improving), you should raise the matter yourself with the Local Authority:

West Sussex County Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

TEL: 01403 22 9900

TEL OUT OF HOURS: 0330 222 6664 EMAIL:

WSChildrenServices@westsussex.gov.uk

- 5.4 The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) offers free specialist advice to people who have serious concerns about how child safety and protection issues are being handled in their workplace (or anywhere else):

phone 0800 028 0285

help@nspcc.org.uk

- 5.5 If you have a different kind of concern (not safeguarding) which you think is extremely serious,
- or if you believe the School is likely to hide or destroy evidence;
 - or if you believe your own employment with the School will be damaged if you report the matter to senior School managers;
 - or if you have already reported the matter to senior managers, and nothing seems to have been done;

then you should consider discussing your concern with one of the following external organisations:

(a) Protect (formerly called 'Public Concern at Work') is a charity which provides confidential advice for people who have seen wrongdoing in their workplace but are unsure how to raise their concerns:

phone 0203 117 2520

<https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

(b) Charterhouse is a charity, and if an employee of a charity suspects serious wrongdoing in the organisation, they can report this to the Charity Commission (including anonymously):

email — whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk

(c) Serious concerns about the way schools are run can be reported to His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education (OFSTED):

phone: 0300 123 3155

email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

- 5.6 The Government also has a webpage offering advice in a wide variety of contexts to employees who feel they need to raise serious concerns externally about their own organisations:
<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>