

NP16.1 Whistleblowing Policy

This policy applies to the whole school including EYFS at Newton Prep

Executive Summary

This procedure is designed to deal with disclosure of information by an employee which relates to some bribery, facilitation of tax evasion, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations in the workplace and includes disclosure of information by an employee which relates to matters specific to the provision of a prep school education for children aged 3 - 13 years. Employment legislation governs the making of disclosures concerning workplace activities and is intended to protect those who blow the whistle on bad practice from being subjected to any detriment or from being unfairly dismissed as a result. This procedure is available to all employees, directors, members of the School Council, consultants, contractors, volunteers, gap assistants, casual workers and agency workers who have a genuine concern. All types of wrongdoing are included whether they are acts committed by fellow employees, faults in School procedures or oversights which should be rectified. The procedure should be used even in the event that the act or omission causing you concern has finished or has not yet started.

The School is committed to operating with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

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Whistleblower

A Whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities and such a disclosure is in the public interest (a **whistleblowing concern**) you should report it under this policy.

Grievances

This procedure should not be used where you have a complaint relating to your personal circumstances in the workplace. The grievance procedure contained in the Employment Manual should be used in such cases.

Detriment

Provided that this procedure is used appropriately and correctly, you will not suffer any detriment as a result of reporting a suspected wrongdoing.

Advice

If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from the HR Manager or Bursar, a Designated Safeguarding Lead, Protect, the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline or the Modern Slavery helpline.

Safeguarding

Nothing within this policy is intended to prevent staff from complying with their statutory obligations in accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, September 2022). In particular:

Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy

If you have any concern about a pupil's welfare, action should be taken immediately. You should report the concern to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. See the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures for full information about what to do if you have a concern about a pupil, including what to do if the Designated Safeguarding Leads are not available.

Safeguarding - member of staff

Staff should raise any concerns, including all low-level concerns, about another staff member with the Head, or if the concern is about the Head, with the Chairman (without first notifying the Head) in accordance with the procedures in School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. In a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Head, this should be reported directly to the local authority designated officer(s) (LADOs).

Whistleblowing Policy

You should follow this procedure to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices at the School or potential failures by the School or staff to properly fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities.

The Modern Slavery Helpline

The School is committed to the prevention of Modern Slavery. If you have any queries relating to Modern Slavery, please contact the HR Manager. Identified instances of modern slavery should be immediately notified to the police. If you think you have identified an instance of modern slavery, or if you consider that you may be a victim of modern slavery you may contact the Modern Slavery helpline on 08000 121 700.

Confidentiality

The School hopes that staff 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.

Procedure

The school hopes that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your manager for any reason, you should contact the HR Manager (hrmanager@newtonprep.co.uk), the Head (head@newtonprep.co.uk), the Bursar (bursar@newtonprep.co.uk) or the Chairman (chairman@newtonprep.co.uk) as appropriate.

The school 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.

Protection and Support for Whistleblowers

The school aims 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 HR Manager immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

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, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

Protect operates a confidential advice helpline. Their contact details are: 020 3117 2520

Relevant external reporting

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing 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, or those listed below. The school strongly encourages you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Protect operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

Relevant outside bodies:

1. the Local Authority Designated Officer;
2. Children's Social Care;
3. the NSPCC;
4. the Health and Safety Executive;
5. the Environment Agency;
6. the Information Commissioner;
7. the Department for Education (DfE);
8. the Department for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy;
9. the Police;
10. the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI);
11. the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted);
12. the Channel Police Practitioner.

Protect

If you have any concerns about disclosing a suspected wrongdoing the independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, operates a confidential advice helpline: 020 3117 2520

NSPCC

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0808 800 5000 8.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday. Alternatively email help@nspcc.org.uk at any time.

The Media

You should under no circumstances approach a commercial body or the media with details of the suspected wrongdoing. If you approach any such body and / or where your concern is disclosed in a malicious manner or for personal gain the protection given to you by this procedure may be lost.

Additionally, the School may consider this to be gross misconduct and disciplinary action may be taken against you.

Queries

If you have any queries about this procedure, you should contact the HR Manager.

Accessing the Policy: This policy is also available in various formats to allow everyone to access it. Please contact the Bursar to request a copy of this policy in an alternative form.

Review and Update Process

Member(s) of staff responsible for update	HR Manager, Bursar
Sub-Committee responsible for review	General Purposes Committee
Last review by GPC	November 2022
Last updated by SLT	November 2022
Next review by GPC	October 2023
Next update by SLT	October 2023