

Pupil Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure

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Pupil Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure

Introduction

This policy relates to the disclosure internally or externally by pupils of Putney High School. It mirrors the Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure relating to staff and employees of the school.

It is important to the school that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by pupils or staff is reported and properly dealt with. Putney High School therefore encourages all pupils to raise any concerns that they may have about malpractice or misconduct within the organisation. This policy sets out the way in which pupils may raise such concerns and how those concerns will be dealt with.

Background

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. At Putney High School, we feel that the pupils should also be protected under a whistle blowing policy. These are called 'qualifying disclosures'. A qualifying disclosure is one made by a pupil who has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of any other legal obligation
- concealment of any of the above
- bullying
- misconduct
- safeguarding concern

is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. It is not necessary for the pupil to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. The pupil has no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

A pupil who makes such a protected disclosure has the right not to be dismissed, or subjected to victimisation, because they have made the disclosure.

Putney High School encourages pupils to raise their concerns informally and in confidence with their form tutor, teacher, the school counsellor, and the school nurse, a Head of Year and/or Head of Key Stage in the first instance. We know that it is never easy to report a concern, particularly one that may relate to child protection or safeguarding, fraud or corruption. We urge you to come forward with any concerns at an early stage, and before problems have a chance to become serious.

It is the responsibility of form tutors to ensure that new pupils are aware of this policy during their induction period.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of an informal discussion, or if for any other reason you feel it inappropriate to bring forward the issue on an informal basis, you should then raise the matter in accordance with the following procedures.

Principles

Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at school. Pupils should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature of which they become aware. Where there are concerns relating to child protection, pupils should report them and to press for re-consideration, if necessary, if there is no improvement.

Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the pupil who raised the issue.

No pupil will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This applies equally if you come forward with a concern that turns out later not to have been justified.

Victimisation of a pupil for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.

If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure the Putney High School's sanctions policy will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.

Maliciously or knowingly making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.

An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, employees should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to a more senior manager.

Procedure

In matters of child safeguarding there are separate procedures for reporting concerns. Please refer to the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Stage 1

In the first instance, any concerns should be raised with your form tutor. If you reasonably believe your form tutor to be involved in any wrongdoing, or for any other reason do not wish to approach your form tutor, then you should proceed straight to stage 2. If you prefer, you may come forward with another pupil.

Your form tutor will arrange an investigation of the matter (either by investigating the matter her- or himself or immediately passing the issue to someone in a more senior position). The investigation may involve you giving a written statement. The form tutor (or the person who carried out the investigation) will then report to the Head of Year or a member of the Senior Management Team, who will initiate any necessary action. On conclusion of any investigation, you will be told the outcome of the investigation and what action is being taken. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

Stage 2

If you are concerned that your form tutor is involved in the wrongdoing or has failed to make a proper investigation or to report properly the outcome of the investigations, you should inform the Head of Year. If for any other reason you do not wish to approach your form tutor you should contact the Head of Year or a member of the Senior Management Team. Any such approach will be treated with the strictest confidence and your identity will not be disclosed without your prior consent.