



# Heath Mount School

## **Whistleblowing Policy**

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**Heath Mount School, Hertfordshire**

**Independent Day and Boarding School for Boys  
and Girls**

February 2017

## Key School Contacts

<p><b>Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Lead</b> Jonny Spowart</p>	<p>Email: <a href="mailto:spowartjo@heathmount.org">spowartjo@heathmount.org</a> Telephone number: 01920 830 230, ext. 275 Mobile number: 07957 265376</p>
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## Key External Contacts

<b>Public Concern at Work</b> (independent whistleblowing charity operating a confidential helpline)	<a href="http://www.pcaw.org.uk/">http://www.pcaw.org.uk/</a> Email: UK advice line: <a href="mailto:whistle@pcaw.org.uk">whistle@pcaw.org.uk</a> Telephone number (whistleblowing advice line): 020 7404 6609
<b>NSPCC</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a> Telephone: 0800 028 0285 (8.00am to 8.00pm Monday – Friday)
<b>Hertfordshire Children's Social Care department</b>	
Hertfordshire County Council	0300 123 4043
Multi- Agency Safeguarding hub (MASH) Advice- Check System - 1 Day turnaround	01438737511
Local Authority's out of hours contact numbers	0300 123 4043
Senior Child Protection Schools Designated Officer and Herts line manager	01992 556974 <a href="mailto:Frazer.smith@hertfordshire.gov.uk">Frazer.smith@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Support Officer Child Protection, Statutory Review and Performance Team	01992 556908 <a href="mailto:Lynn.keats@hertfordshire.gov.uk">Lynn.keats@hertfordshire.gov.uk</a>

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Honesty and integrity: Heath Mount School (the School) is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards in accordance with the Code of Conduct. All organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.

## 2 Aims

- 2.1 The aims of this policy are to:
- 2.1.1 encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected;
  - 2.1.2 provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns; and
  - 2.1.3 reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

## 3 Scope

- 3.1 This policy is a whole School policy, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision and applies to all staff. 'Staff' is defined as all employees, officers, governors, consultants, contractors, volunteers, work placement students, casual workers and agency workers.
- 3.2 A copy of this policy is available to all staff either in the 'Policies' section of the staff drive or via the School website. A hard copy is also available in all of the staff rooms. Parents can download a copy via the School website. It can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

## 4 Wrongdoing at work

- 4.1 **Whistleblowing:** is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:
- 4.1.1 criminal activity;
  - 4.1.2 safeguarding concerns (see paragraph 9 below);
  - 4.1.3 failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
  - 4.1.4 miscarriages of justice;
  - 4.1.5 danger to health and safety;

- 4.1.6 damage to the environment;
- 4.1.7 bribery;
- 4.1.8 financial fraud or mismanagement;
- 4.1.9 other unlawful or unethical conduct in the workplace;
- 4.1.10 the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

## 5 **Whistleblower**

- 5.1 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 (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy.

## 6 **Grievances**

- 6.1 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.

## 7 **Detriment**

- 7.1 Provided that this procedure is used appropriately and correctly, you will not suffer any detriment as a result of reporting a suspected wrongdoing. A failure to follow this procedure may however make the disclosure unreasonable and the protection given to you by this procedure may be lost.

## 8 **Advice**

- 8.1 **If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from any of the following: the Head; Bursar; Compliance Officer; Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL); the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DDSL); Public Concern at Work or the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline. All internal and external contact details can be found at pages 2 and 3 of this policy.**

## **Safeguarding**

### 9 **Safeguarding:**

- 9.1 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 2016). In particular:

9.1.1 **Safeguarding / child protection policy:** you should raise any initial safeguarding concerns about a child with the DSL (or in their absence the DDSL) in accordance with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

9.2 **Safeguarding - member of staff:** You should raise any concerns about another staff member with the Head, or if the concern is about the Head, with the Chair of Governors (without first notifying the Head) in accordance with the procedures in appendix 4 of the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

9.3 **Whistleblowing policy:** You should follow this procedure to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practices at the School or potential failures by the School or staff to properly safeguard the welfare of pupils if you are concerned that the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are not being followed correctly.

**Referral: If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police immediately. Anyone can make a referral. Contact details can be found at page 3 of this Policy.**

## 10 **Exit interviews**

10.1 All staff are trained so that they understand they are expected and encouraged to raise concerns they have, whether related to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils, the conduct of staff or other matters, during the course of their employment in accordance with this policy. Safeguarding children is at the centre of the School's culture and concerns should always be raised in accordance with paragraph 9 above. If issues have not been identified before, safeguarding will always be considered formally during staff performance development reviews and appraisal and finally at exit interviews which may be held with leavers. Staff who raise concerns about working practices at the School to the DSL, DDSLs or an appropriate senior member of Staff will be protected from detriment under this policy.

## 11 **Confidentiality**

11.1 We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

## 12 **Anonymous disclosures**

12.1 We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible.

### 13 **Investigations: stage one**

- 13.1 **Procedure:** You should disclose the suspected wrongdoing first to your Head of Department / Line Manager. In the event that your Head of Department / Line Manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you should proceed directly to Stage Two of this procedure.
- 13.2 **Response:** You can expect a response detailing to whom the disclosure has been notified or any action taken within seven days of your Head of Department / Line Manager becoming aware of the disclosure.

### 14 **Investigations: stage two**

- 14.1 **Procedure:** If no response is forthcoming after seven days from your Head of Department / Line Manager, if you are not satisfied with the way in which your concern has been handled or if your Head of Department / Line Manager is involved in the suspected wrongdoing you should notify the Head or Bursar, as appropriate.
- 14.2 **Response:** You can expect a response detailing any action taken within seven days of the Head / Bursar becoming aware of the disclosure.

### 15 **Investigations: stage three**

- 15.1 **Procedure:** If no response is forthcoming after seven days from the Head / Bursar, if you are not satisfied with the way in which your concern has been handled or if the Head / Bursar is involved in the suspected wrongdoing you should inform the Chair of Governors of the disclosure.

### 16 **Concerns against Governors**

- 16.1 Any concern regarding a Governor will be raised by the head with the Chair of Governors, who will follow the procedure above. If the concern relates to the Chair of Governors, then the concern will be taken directly by the Head to the Deputy Chair of Governors. Such a concern would then normally be referred to the Department for Education.

### 17 **Relevant external reporting**

- 17.1 **Outside bodies:** The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. The law recognises, as does paragraph 9 above, that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to a relevant outside body including:
- 17.1.1 the local authority's Designated Officer;
  - 17.1.2 Children's Social Care;

- 17.1.3 the NSPCC;
- 17.1.4 the Health and Safety Executive;
- 17.1.5 the Environment Agency;
- 17.1.6 the Information Commissioner;
- 17.1.7 the Department for Education;
- 17.1.8 the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills;
- 17.1.9 the Police;
- 17.1.10 the Charity Commission;
- 17.1.11 the Independent Schools Inspectorate;
- 17.1.12 the Channel Police Practitioner.

18 **Advice:** Staff are strongly encouraged to seek advice **before** reporting a concern to anyone external. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally but before you do, as well as considering the internal help and support available which is identified above, please seek external advice from:

18.1 **Public Concern at Work:** If you have any concerns about disclosing a suspected wrongdoing the independent whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work, operates a confidential helpline. Staff can call 020 7404 6609 for advice.

18.2 **NSPCC:** The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8.00 am to 8.00 pm Monday to Friday) or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

19 **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, this may make the disclosure unreasonable and 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.

20 **Queries:** If you have any queries about this procedure, you should contact the Bursar.

Authorised by:	The Head
Effective from:	17 February 2017
Date of Next Review:	February 2017
Related Policies:	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures