



Whistleblowing Policy

Information for Parents: This policy is available on the school's website and on request.

The Ursuline Preparatory School does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

This policy is applicable to all pupils including those in the EYFS.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Lower-Level Concerns Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1. **Wrongdoing at work**

This procedure is designed to deal with disclosure of information by an employee which relates to some Safeguarding issues, danger, bribery, corruption, fraud or other unlawful or unethical conduct in the workplace. Employment legislation governs the making of disclosures concerning workplace activities and is intended to protect employees 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 who discover something they feel that they should pass on in the interest of the public. 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 must be used even in the event that the act or omission causing you concern has finished or has not yet started.

2. **Staff**

It is essential that staff follow this policy if they are concerned that a disclosure of allegation of abuse has not been dealt with properly, or, has not been referred to an external agency, or if they believe another member of staff or other person, working with the children has displayed inappropriate behaviour or interest towards children.

3. **Grievances**

This procedure should not however be used where you have a complaint relating to your personal circumstances in the workplace. The Grievance Procedure must be used in such cases.

4. Detriment

Provided that this procedure is used appropriately and correctly and you make the disclosure in good faith you will not suffer any detriment as a result of reporting the 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.

Stage One

5. Procedure

You should disclose the suspected wrongdoing first to the Headteacher. In the event that your Headteacher is involved in the suspected wrongdoing, you shall be entitled to proceed directly to Stage Two of this procedure.

The person raising the concern is ensured of total confidentiality as far as possible. There may be circumstances in which it will need to be declared that they are the whistleblower. The school will protect their identity if possible. However, any malicious accusation that has no substance will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.

6. Response

You can expect a response detailing to whom the disclosure has been notified or any action taken within seven days of your Headteacher becoming aware of the disclosure.

Stage Two

7. Procedure

If no response is forthcoming after seven days or if the Headteacher is involved in the suspected wrongdoing you shall be entitled to notify the Chair of Governors.

8. Response

You can expect a response detailing any action taken within seven days of the Chair of Governors becoming aware of this disclosure.

Stage Three

9. Outside body

If you do not receive a response within seven days you shall be entitled to notify a relevant and appropriate body outside the school which may include:

- Children's Social Care
- The Health and Safety Executive
- The Environment Agency

- The Information Commissioner
- The Independent Schools Association
- The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
- The Police
- The Charity Commission
- The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)
- LADO (Local Area Designated Officer)

10. Bypassing the procedure

In extreme circumstances you will have the right to raise your concern directly with a relevant and appropriate outside body without first having followed the stages above. This may however cause damage to the school and its reputation as well as constitute a breach of your own duty of confidentiality towards the school and this action should only be taken in extreme circumstances and after careful thought.

11. Keeping children safe in education

For the avoidance of doubt nothing within this policy is intended to prevent staff from complying with their statutory obligations in accordance with "Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)". In particular if, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately.

12. Extreme circumstances

The school will consider whether extreme circumstances exist where you have a reasonable belief that the school will subject you to detriment if you inform the Headteacher in accordance with Stage One above or if you inform the Chair of Governors in accordance with Stage Two; a cover up is being mounted by the school; or a disclosure made previously to the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors in accordance with the stages above has not prompted a satisfactory response.

13. The media

Even when extreme circumstances are thought to exist, 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 for personal gain, the school may consider this to be gross misconduct and immediate disciplinary action may be taken against you.

14. Queries

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