

2018-219

THE HAWKSWOOD GROUP

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY



**Approved by the Management Committee of
Hawkswood Group**

Chair of Management Committee: Mr Mark Morrall

Date approved	May 2017	Management Committee
Date amended	April 2018	Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead
Amendments agreed	April 2018	Management Committee
Future amendments	Oct' 2018	To be revised in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018
Reviewed	Annually	Management Committee

The Hawkswood Group

Executive Head Teacher: Catherine Davies

The Hawkswood Centre | Antlers Hill, Chingford E4 7RT

Associate Headteachers:

Burnside PRU: Bridget Solecka

Hawkswood Therapeutic PRU: Linda McCaffrey

Hawkswood Primary PRU: Marie Gentles

Forest Pathway College: Carolyn Crampin

Alternative Provisions: Gabrielle Grodentz

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Hawkswood Group

This guidance is written for staff working with children and young people in education settings including maintained schools in conjunction with and advice from LBWF Safeguarding in Education Team.

Staff at the Hawkswood Group must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young person who is targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

"Absolutely without fail - challenge poor practice or performance. If you ignore or collude with poor practice it makes it harder to sound the alarm when things go wrong" (reproduced with acknowledgement to "Sounding the Alarm" – Barnardos)

Reasons for whistle blowing

- All staff have a responsibility to safeguard – it is your duty to report concerns immediately
- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risk of harm to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

What stops people from whistle blowing

- Fear of starting a chain of events which spirals out of control
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed
- Perceived "loyalty" amongst colleagues
- Fear of not knowing the correct reporting procedure

How to raise a concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken

- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why
- Approach your immediate manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Head teacher
- If your concern is about your immediate manager/Head teacher, speak to the Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead, Safeguarding Link Governor or Chair of Governors, or if you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the Education Safeguarding Service or LADO.
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response - don't let matters rest
- Ideally, you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places wherever you can
- Report your concern confidentially, not in a public or shared space or to a group of staff members.
- Do not report your concern in hearing distance of visitors or members of outside agencies

A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

¹ Staff includes any adult, paid or voluntary, who works in a school or educational establishment within the Local Authority.

What happens next

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence
- Members of staff who have not followed correct reporting procedures as outlined above may face disciplinary proceedings
- Your concern will be discussed confidentially at senior level and a decision will be made as to whether or not a referral to the LADO is required. In many cases, the LADO will be consulted with and school will be advised by the LADO if there are reasonable grounds for a referral and formal investigation.
- If there are grounds for investigation, the LADO may suggest the school should conduct an internal investigation and report back to the LADO with findings. In occasional circumstances the LADO will decide to investigate themselves.
- All reports and investigations will be carried out promptly and will be documented. Documents will be kept securely.

Self-reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager, HR department and/or your professional or trade union. If you feel unable to talk to someone within your PRU, it is strongly recommended that you contact either:

Olivia Lee - Hawkswood Group Safeguarding & Inclusion Lead (07970994105) or 0208 2894647

Or

Gillian Nash - LBWF LADO in the Safeguarding in Education Service:
(Gillian.nash@walthamforest.gov.uk) Tel: 0208 496 3646

The hawkswood Group Safeguarding Link Governor is **Stephen Cobbold**
(Stephen.Cobbold@nelft.nhs.uk)