

# Manor Hall Academy Trust



## WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing this policy lies with the Headteacher and LAB. A review of this policy and recommendations for change should be presented to the Directors of the trust for verifications.

The Directors of the trust, in line with the Scheme of Delegation and Articles of Association have overall responsibility for the effective operation of MAT policies, but has delegated day to day responsibility to the Headteacher and LAB.

Directors will take account of recommendations from individual schools in review of this policy and seek HR advice as to such revisions.

## MANOR HALL ACADEMY TRUST

# WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

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### 1. Policy statement

- 1.1. We are committed to running our Academies with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. However, 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 or to address them when they do occur.
- 1.2. The aims of this policy are:
  - 1.2.1. To 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.
  - 1.2.2 To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.
  - 1.2.3 To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 1.3. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.
- 1.4. This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels in our Academies (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

### 2. What is whistleblowing?

- 2.1. Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:
  - 2.1.1. criminal activity;
  - 2.1.2. miscarriages of justice;
  - 2.1.3. danger to health and safety;
  - 2.1.4. safeguarding failings;
  - 2.1.5. damage to the environment;
  - 2.1.6. failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
  - 2.1.7. bribery;
  - 2.1.8. financial fraud or mismanagement;
  - 2.1.9. negligence;
  - 2.1.10. the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

- 2.2. 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.
- 2.3. It is not necessary to have proof that an act is being, has been, or is likely to be committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. The employee has no responsibility for investigating the matter. It is the responsibility of the School to investigate.
- 2.4. This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the Grievance Procedure or the Bullying and Harassment Policy as appropriate.
- 2.5. If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from, Richard Redgate, Chief Executive, whose contact details are at the end of this policy.

### 3. Raising a whistleblowing concern

- 3.1. We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your Line Manager. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. In some cases, they may refer the matter to the Chief Executive.
- 3.2. However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your Line Manager has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact Richard Redgate, whose contact details are set out at the end of this policy.
  - 3.2.1. Safeguarding concerns: In exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency where a child is in immediate danger, or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, staff members can speak directly to the Staffordshire First Response Team, whose details are at the end of this policy.  
In addition, the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 - line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).
  - 3.2.2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) would usually decide whether to make a referral to children's social care, but it is important to note that any staff member can refer their concerns to children's social care directly. In this case, the member of staff would need to inform the DSL of their action.
- 3.3. We 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.
- 3.4. We will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

## **4. Confidentiality**

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. 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. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Chief Executive and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt you can seek advice from Public Concern at Work, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

## **5. External disclosures**

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. 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. It will very rarely, if ever, be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.
- 5.3. Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a parent, supplier or other service provider.

In some circumstances the law will protect you if you raise the matter with a third party directly. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally first.

## **6. Investigation and outcome**

- 6.1. Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.
- 6.2. In some cases, we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.
- 6.3. We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

6.4. If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **7. If you are not satisfied**

7.1. While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy, you can help us to achieve this.

7.2. If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with the Chief Executive. Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

7.3. If your concerns relate to the Chief Executive, you can also raise your concerns with the Chair of the LAB. Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

## **8. Protection and support for whistleblowers**

8.1. It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

8.2. Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Chief Executive immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

8.3. Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **9. Responsibility for the success of this policy**

9.1. The Directors have overall responsibility for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.

9.2. The Headteacher has day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy, accounting to the Chief Executive and must ensure that all managers and other staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive regular and appropriate training.



## 10. Contacts

<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>	Mr Richard Redgate Tel: 07365 223659 email: ceo@manorhall.academy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Archer Tel: 07984 971430 email: headteacher@chaseleapru.staffs.sch.uk
<b>Chief Finance Officer</b>	Mrs Trina Lawlor Tel: 01782 550202 Email: trina.lawlor@manorhall.academy
<b>Chair of the LAB</b>	Mr Chris Hilton Tel: 01543 227095 email: chair@chaseleapru.staffs.sch.uk
<b>Public Concern at Work (Independent whistleblowing charity)</b>	Helpline: (020) 7404 6609 E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk
<b>NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline</b>	Helpline: 0800 028 0285 line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.
<b>Staffordshire First Response</b>	0800 1313126 Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 0845 6042886